

# **IVAR VEERMÄE**

## **PORTFOLIO**

# BIOGRAPHY

Ivar Veermäe (born 1982 in Tallinn Estonia, lives in Berlin) has had solo exhibitions in Edith-Russ-Haus, Oldenburg, Germany, Gallery im Turm, Berlin, Tallinn Art Hall Gallery, AV17 Gallery in Vilnius, Cultural Center Belgrade, and City Gallery of Tallinn, Estonia among others.

His work has been exhibited in group exhibitions at Riga Biennale, Venice Architecture Biennale, transmediale Festival in HKW, Moscow Biennale for Young Art, BIENALSUR in Buenos Aires, the Bozar in Brussels, the ZKM in Karlsruhe, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Netherlands, the Art Museum of Estonia, Art Hall of Tallinn, the Estonian Contemporary Art Museum, the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, the Kulturhuset Bronden in Denmark, the Kunstverein Wolfsburg, the Kunstverein Kassel, the Pinnacles Gallery in Australia.

His videos are being screened at the Rencontres Internationales in Paris and Berlin, in HeK Basel, transmediale Festival, e-flux.com, MoMa web platform, AND Festival in Manchester, EMAF in Osnabrück, Kasseler Dokfest, Crosstalk festival in Budapest, in Virtual Memorial, Cambodia.

My work evolves through artist research, whereby first hand information from certain locations, that is combined with discussion with people connected to the place or topic is most important. Artist research is a possibility to generate diversely accessible non-linear knowledge and emotional access to issues, that can seem abstract otherwise.

I combine video, photography and sound recordings with 3D animations. Often I present my work as multi channel spatial installations.

In my previous practice I have critically analysed digital technologies and companies who operate it concentrating on their local presence contrasted with the different representations (Center of Doubt, 2012 – 2018); mining, energy politics and decentralized cryptocurrencies, bound to certain places with cheap energy supply (The Flood, The Miners and The Heat, 2018 – 2019); terrorist attacks against property and real estate development through shipment of an entire historic building from London to Tallinn (Eternal Interests, 2016 – 2018); environmental changes brought by new Tesla factory in Brandenburg in combination with invasive and endangered species, who live the area (Habitat, 2019 - 2022); tensions between the abstract global and the postextractive local in Eastern Estonia linked linked to phenomena that are often difficult or impossible to perceive, such as the connection between the Earth and the stratosphere, the importance of small particles in the climate system, links between energy production, altered landscapes and their deep past (Second Earth, 2021 - ...).

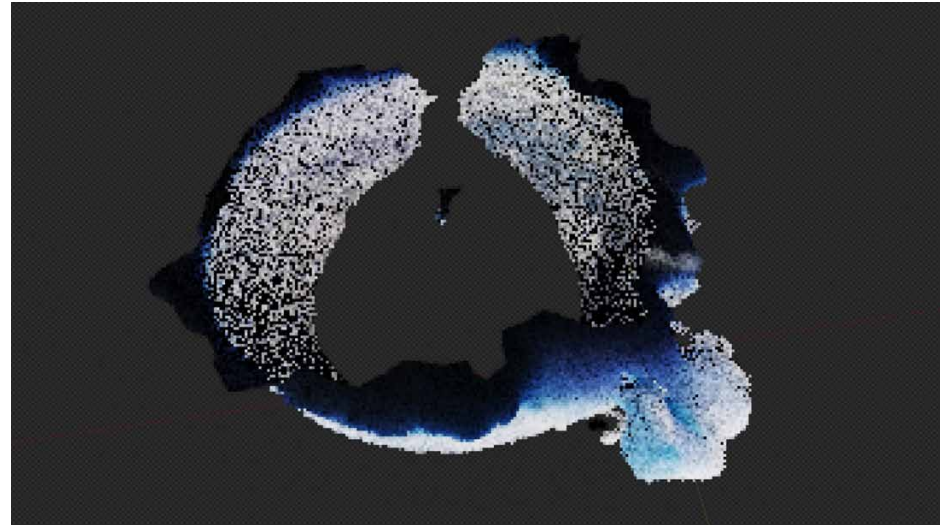
# SECOND EARTH

Research project / video installation  
Single channel or 3 to 6 channels,  
5.1. or 4 channel audio  
2021- ...

The five-channel video follows a strange spherical object, that is being sent to the stratosphere with the weather balloon. Approximately at 30 km of height the balloon bursts and the object falls back to the ground. The work creates a direct visual connection between local place and somewhat more abstract global – the Earth. Similarly important is the exploration of the area, that affects all inhabitants of the Earth – the stratosphere. It is a protective layer for the oxygen based life, that at the same time is a place where carbon dioxide is accumulating, causing thereby climate warming.

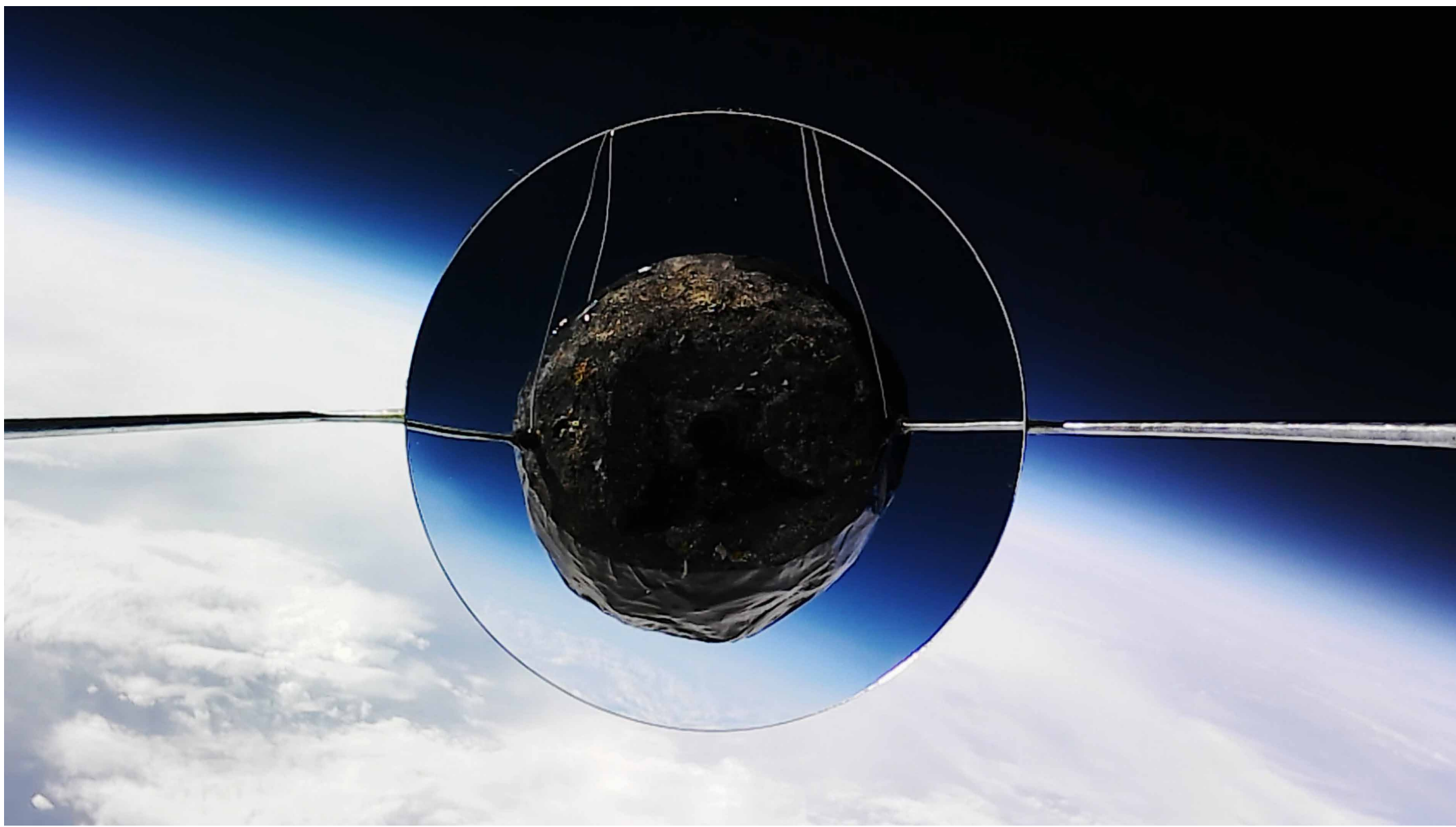
Although according to exact classification the stratosphere is not the space, the work generates a contrast with neo-colonial fantasies of space conquests by depicting fragile and helpless object in enormous and hostile environment.

The sixth video consists conversations with four scientists/ academics, who share their thoughts on topics connected to solar geoengineering. This term refers to a scientific idea about reflecting part of the sunlight back to the outer space, thereby reducing Sun's radiation reaching the Earth and making the planet cooler. One of the most researched proposals consists injection of aerosols to the stratosphere, where they would be circulating for few years. Globally uneven effects of such highly controversial method could be fully known only by its deployment.



The discussion follows wide array of topics – questions about visual models and their real life impact, uncertainties connected to geoengineering and faith, non symmetrical relationships – like single individual and stratosphere compared to similar kind of relation with the God, questions about power connected to geoengineering and CO2 mitigation, guesses about climate warming and the probability of stratospheric aerosol injection deployment.

Abstract visual in the sixth video is based on 3D model, that is generated using photogrammetry from the footage, that the strange black object recorded during the flight to the stratosphere. The whole project follows a question, how to make perceptible, that the ground, the underground and above the ground is single mutually influenced system, that is influencing and being influenced by human actions as well.

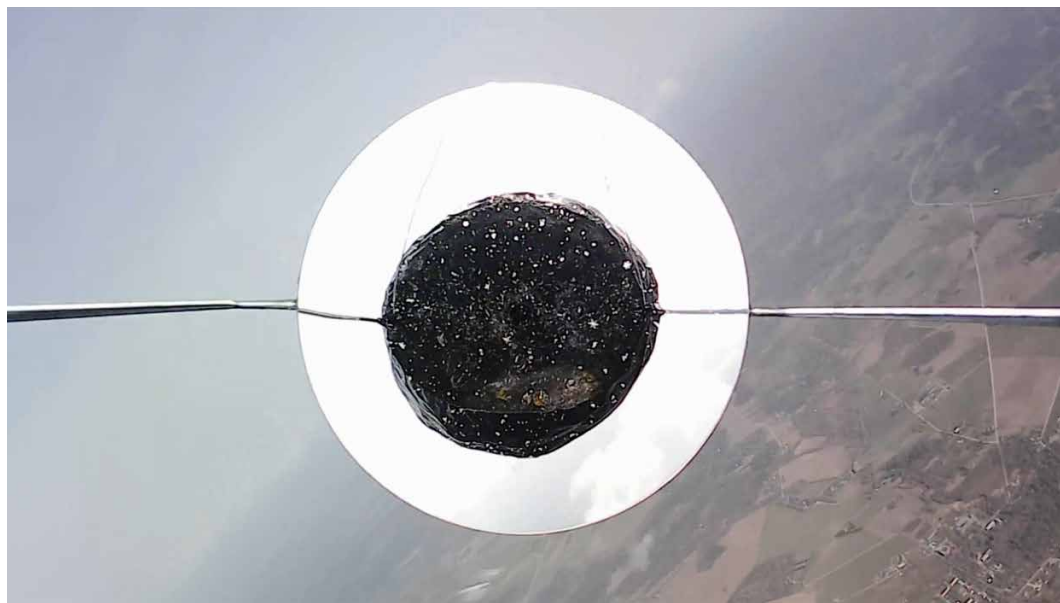
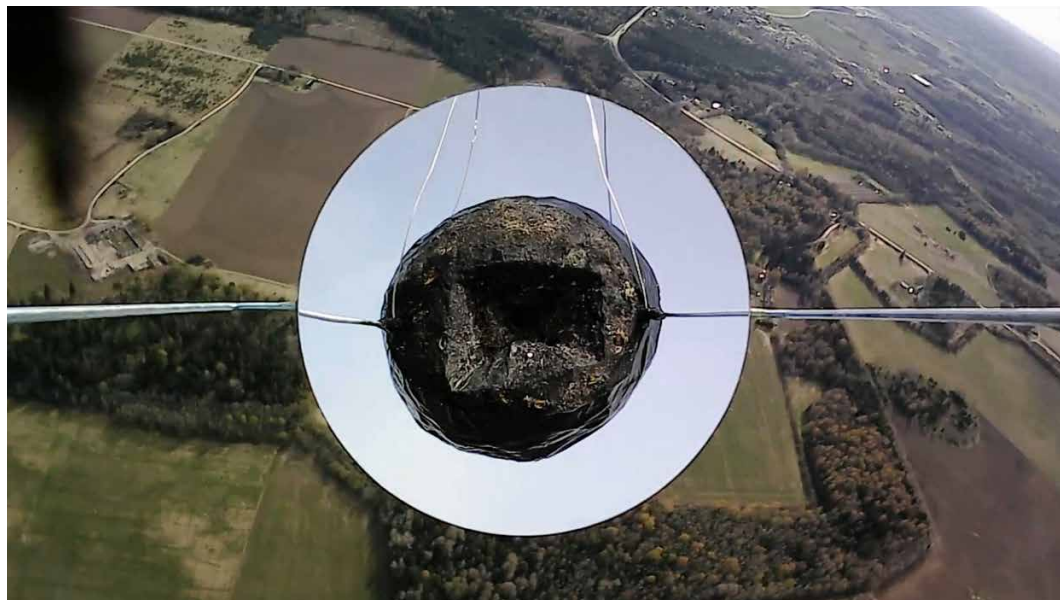
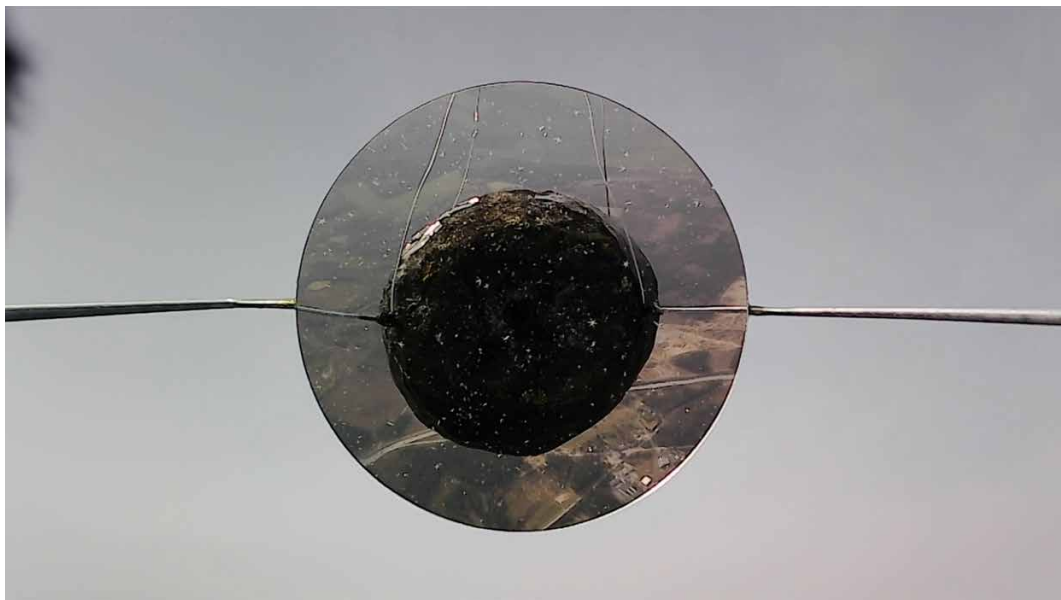






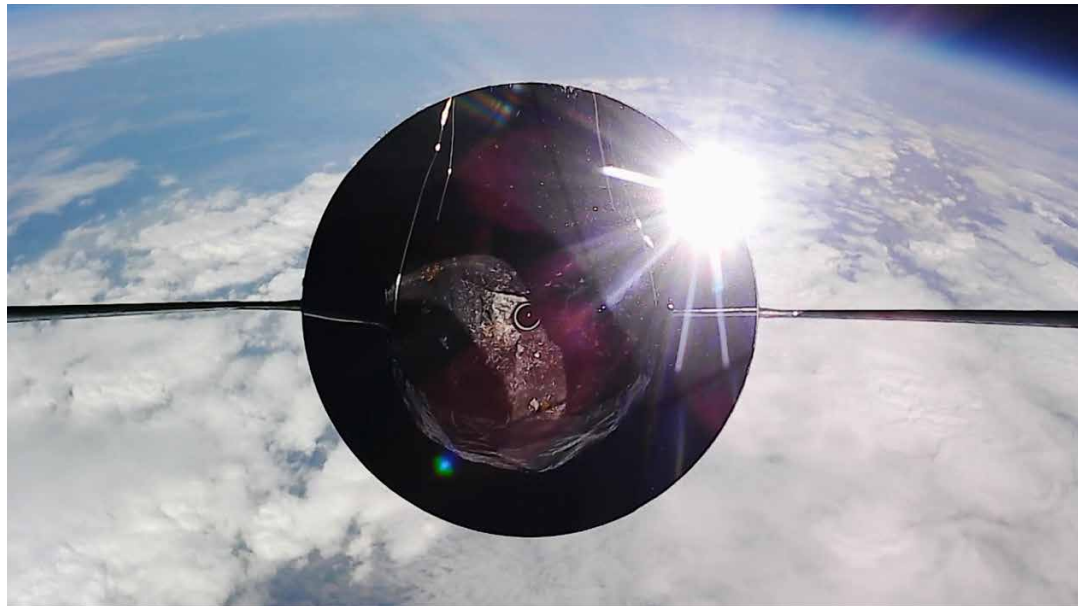
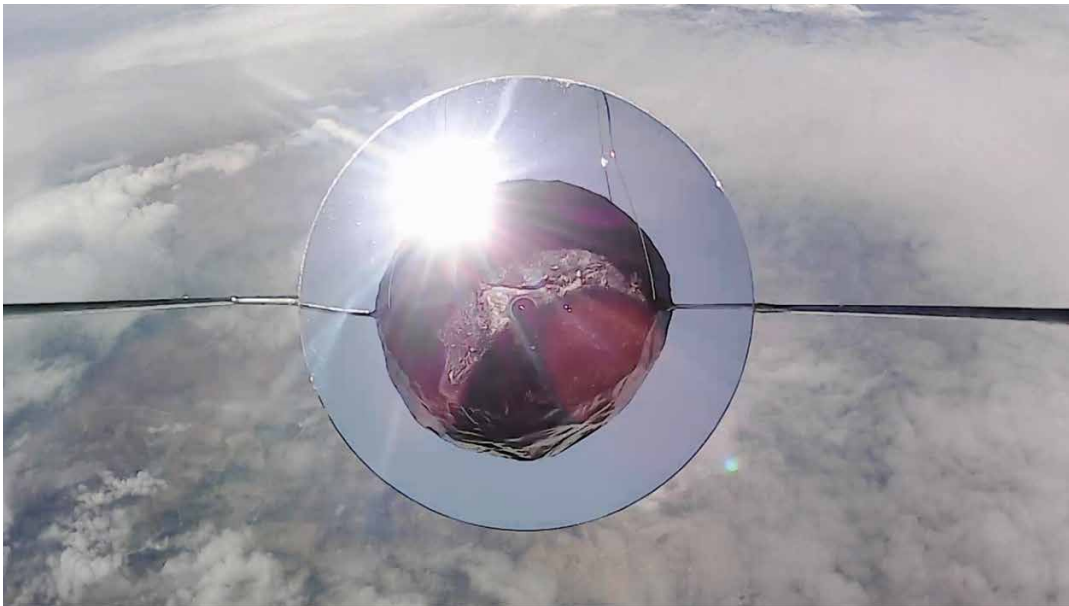
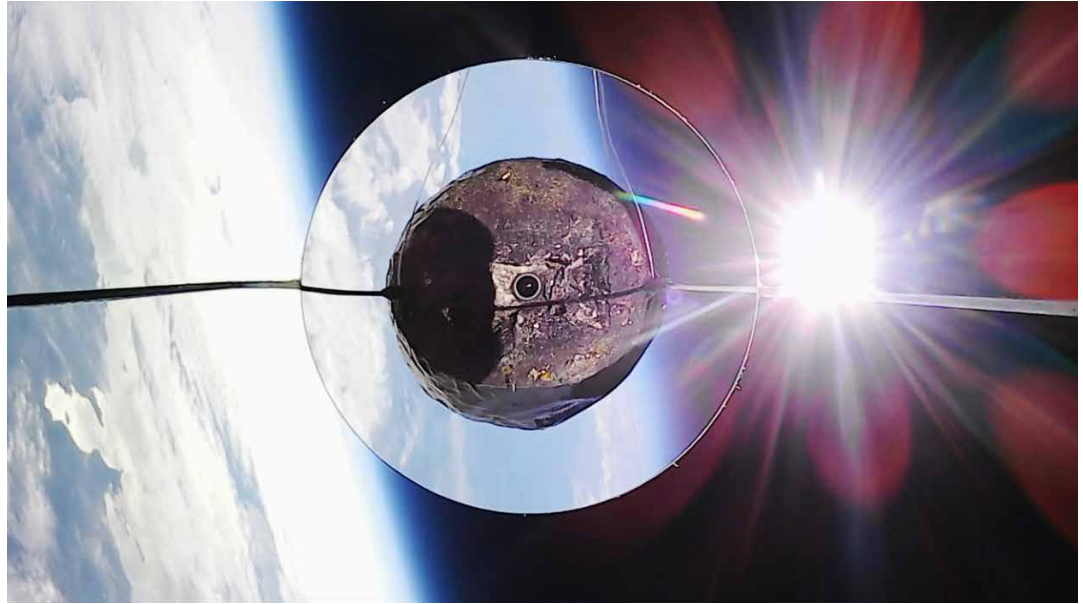
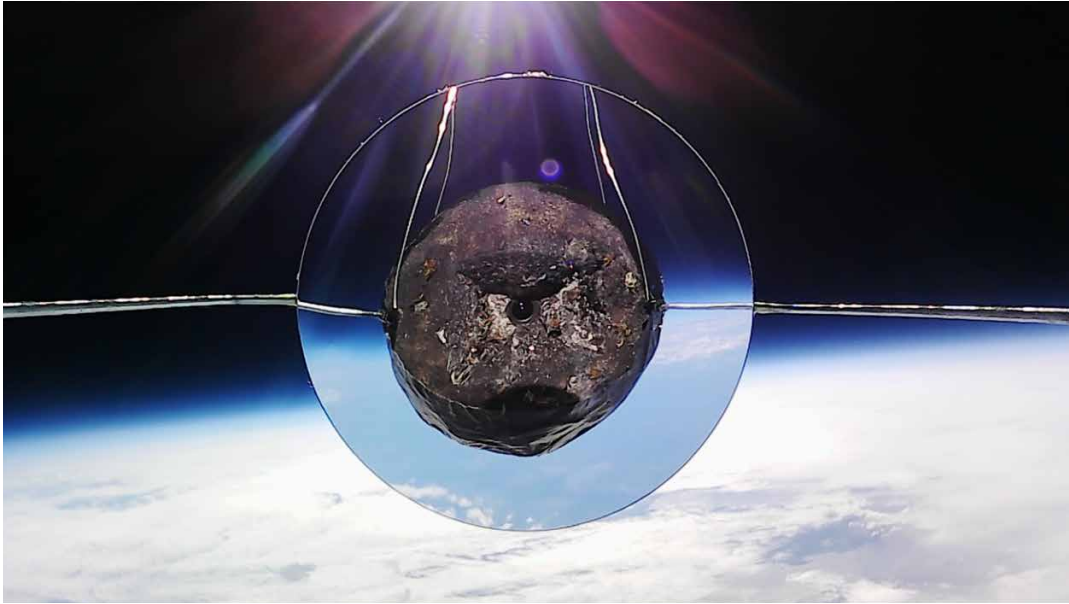
*Second Earth* in the group exhibition *Art in the Age of Anthropocene*, KUMU Estonian Art Museum, 2023

Photo: Joosep Kivimäe











# SECOND EARTH || THE GROUND

Research project / synchronized video installation  
3 channels, 5.1. audio, 8:42 min  
2021- ...

"Second Earth looks at the climate crisis through the lenses of artistic research, field experiments and digital simulation. These methods enable the researcher to explore things otherwise inaccessible to human senses because they are invisible, imperceptible or too abstract, such as the microscopic particles of aerosols or smells. Can we see a smell? How does it change as it goes through different environments in the course of fossil fuel and energy production? Chasing these fine particles, we move from the subterranean layers into the stratosphere and from the interior of the human body to the long memory, where temporal dimensions explode.

Veermäe does not consider the climate crisis from a dystopian perspective but takes an epistemological stance, exploring ways in which an artist can make changes in climate physically and emotionally perceptible. Can we monitor climate or engage in technological manipulation through art? Playing with technology, the artist probes the limits of human perception to get a better understanding of the processes underway now and in the future. He follows the scientists, holding up a distorting mirror to their achievements and promises. The artist of the Anthropocene is a sensitive jester who points to vulnerabilities, dependencies and connections and builds bridges between matter, place and time."  
Ulrike Plath



The work is done with help by:

Steffen Manfred Noe, Estonian University of Life Sciences / SMEAR  
Ainar Varinurm, Kohtla-Järve Oil Shale Museum  
Marek Maasikmets, Mart Vill, Riina Titova and Olfometry Expert Group,  
Estonian Environmental Research Centre  
Miina Krabbi, Tallinn-Harku Meteorological Station  
Kalle Pirk, Oil Shale Competency Centre  
Ralf L. Kraak, Lindenberg Weather Museum  
Etti Kagarov and Jüri Sala, Estonian Oil Shale Museum  
Mare Isakar, TÜ Natural Museum  
Evelin Pääsukene, Estonian Natural Museum  
Rutt Hints, taltech

In previous versions **Second Earth** and **Second Earth II** are exhibited in combination.

















# HABITAT

Video installation

Single channel or 3 - 6 channels

2019 - 2022

*Habitat* concentrates on the difference of perception about relations with biological and technical environments. The project started as an observation of Tesla's Gigafactory building process in Grünheide, Brandenburg.

Besides the development of the plant I was interested in the entities, that could possibly stay less noticed - planted pine forest with oaks, birches, black cherries, rowans and multiple other plants, mounds of sand, uprooted trees, bushes, insects, fungi.

Next to the factory is an area containing weird structures, geotextile and many uprooted trees, that proved to be black cherry (*Prunus serotina*). I found out, that this territory is a new artificial habitat for endangered reptiles - smooth snakes and sand lizards, some of them originating from the territory acquired by Tesla.

History of black cherry - plant native in Northern America, that was introduced in Europe as ornamental tree - brings a parallel story to the work. Its history is commented through interview with biologist Uwe Starfinger.

In the 20th century *Prunus serotina* was widely planted in the forests for improvement of the soil and for protection against the fire. During second half of the century the tree was renamed in Netherlands as „bospest“ – forest plague, because it is an invasive specie, negatively affecting biodiversity and regeneration.

*Habitat* is a combination of documentary footage from the area, as well from the factory opening event with staged action, rented Teslas dashcam material, drone footage, experiments of capturing the environment using photogrammetry.





Video still



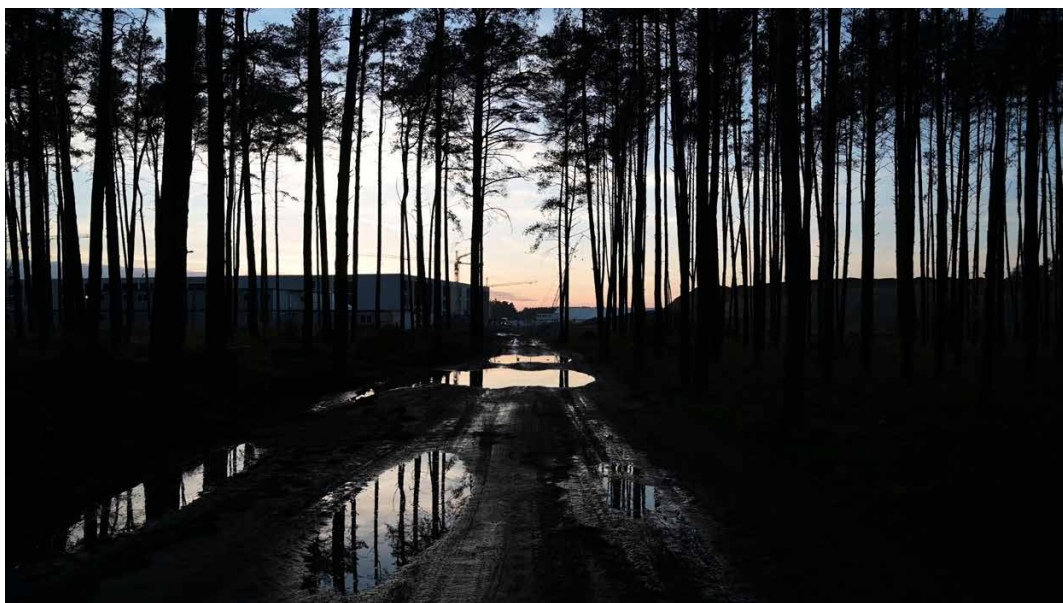
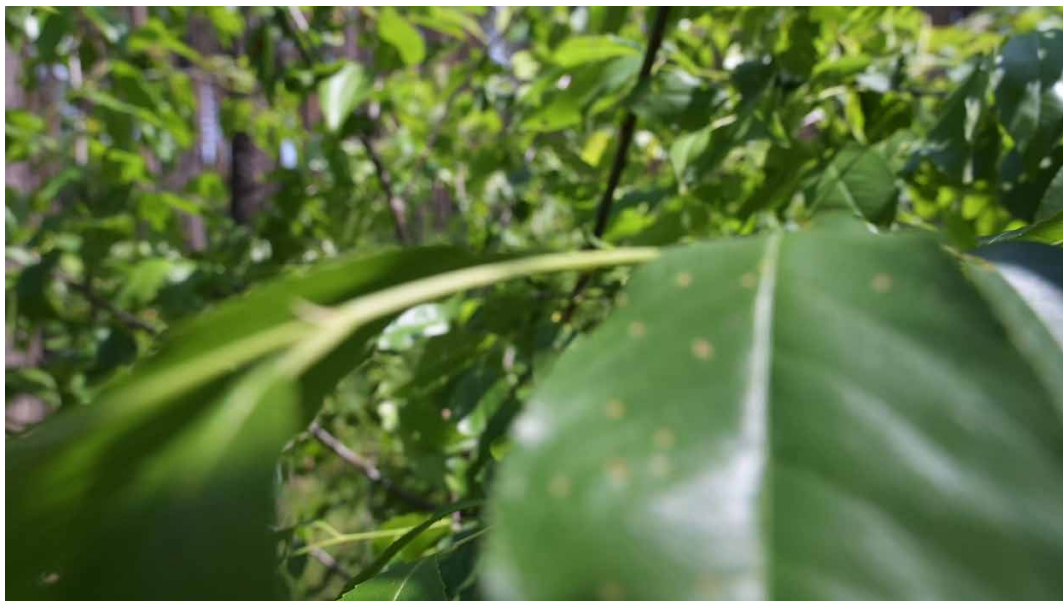
*Habitat*, installation at solo exhibition in AV17 Gallery, Vilnius, 2021





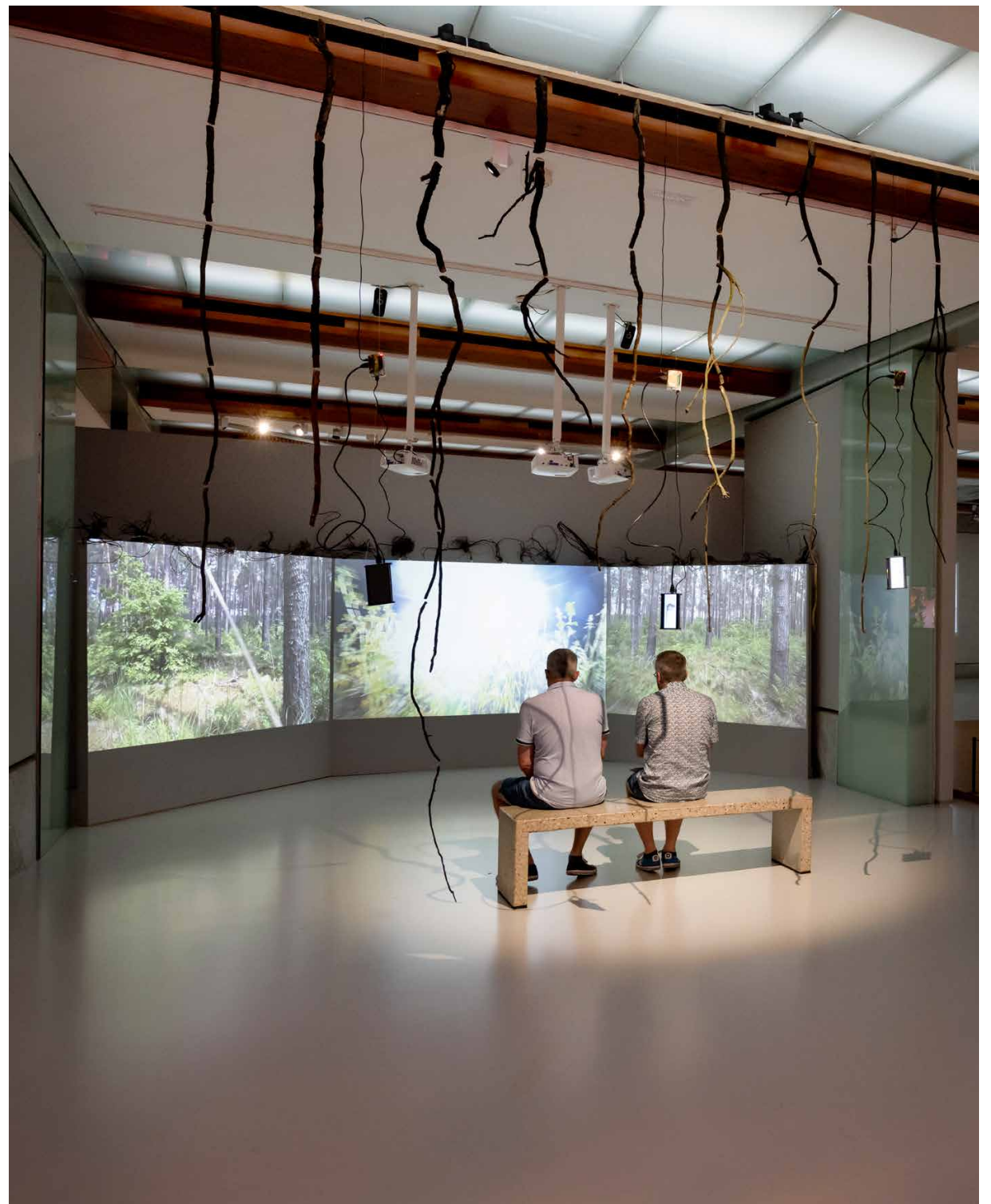
*Habitat*, installation in group exhibition SO FUTURE, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Netherlands, 2022



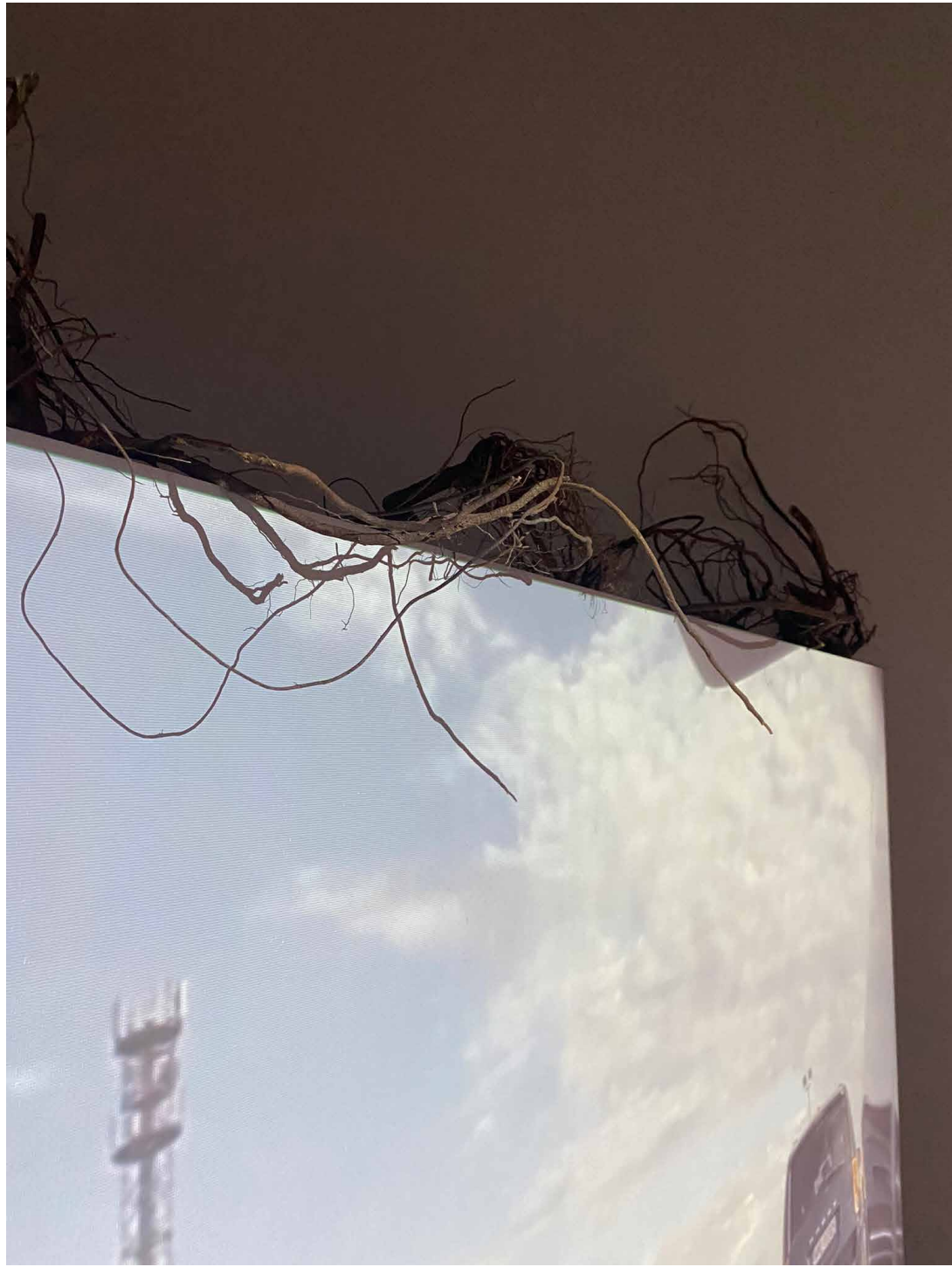


Video stills





*Habitat*, installation in group exhibition SO FUTURE,  
Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Netherlands, 2022







Stills, experimental screens



Video still



# UNIVERSALS II

5.1. Sound Installation  
Cylinder 3,5 m diameter  
2019 - 2023

6 – channel (5.1.) audio work is based on a collection of vocal bursts representing diverse emotional responses - from sadness to pleasure, from surprise to embarrassment, and so on.

The audio files are collected by Alan S. Cowen – a computational social affective neuroscientist at the University of California, Berkeley. He kindly shared the material and allowed to work with it.

The files are processed with audio software and imitated by humans afterwards. Most simple units, proofs of bodily or emotional sensations offer a perfect material to generate sonic environment, that oscillates between closeness and alienation. The work can be perceived as a manipulation – real feelings might be produced through simulation, that has necessary length and intensity.

Link to audio work:  
<https://vimeo.com/812351411>



Photo: Paul Kuimet

UNIVERSALS I and II at group exhibition *Immerse!*, Art Hall Tallinn, Estonia, 2023



Photo: Paul Kuimet

*UNIVERSALS II* at group exhibition *Immerse!*, Art Hall Tallinn, Estonia, 2023



# The Heat

Video Installation

2018 - 2019

About 450 million years ago blue-green algae was massively growing in low waters. Part of that algae has turned into oil shale, that is being turned into consumed energy and waste mountains, containing the residue of carbon rich oil shale in Ida-Virumaa county, Estonia.

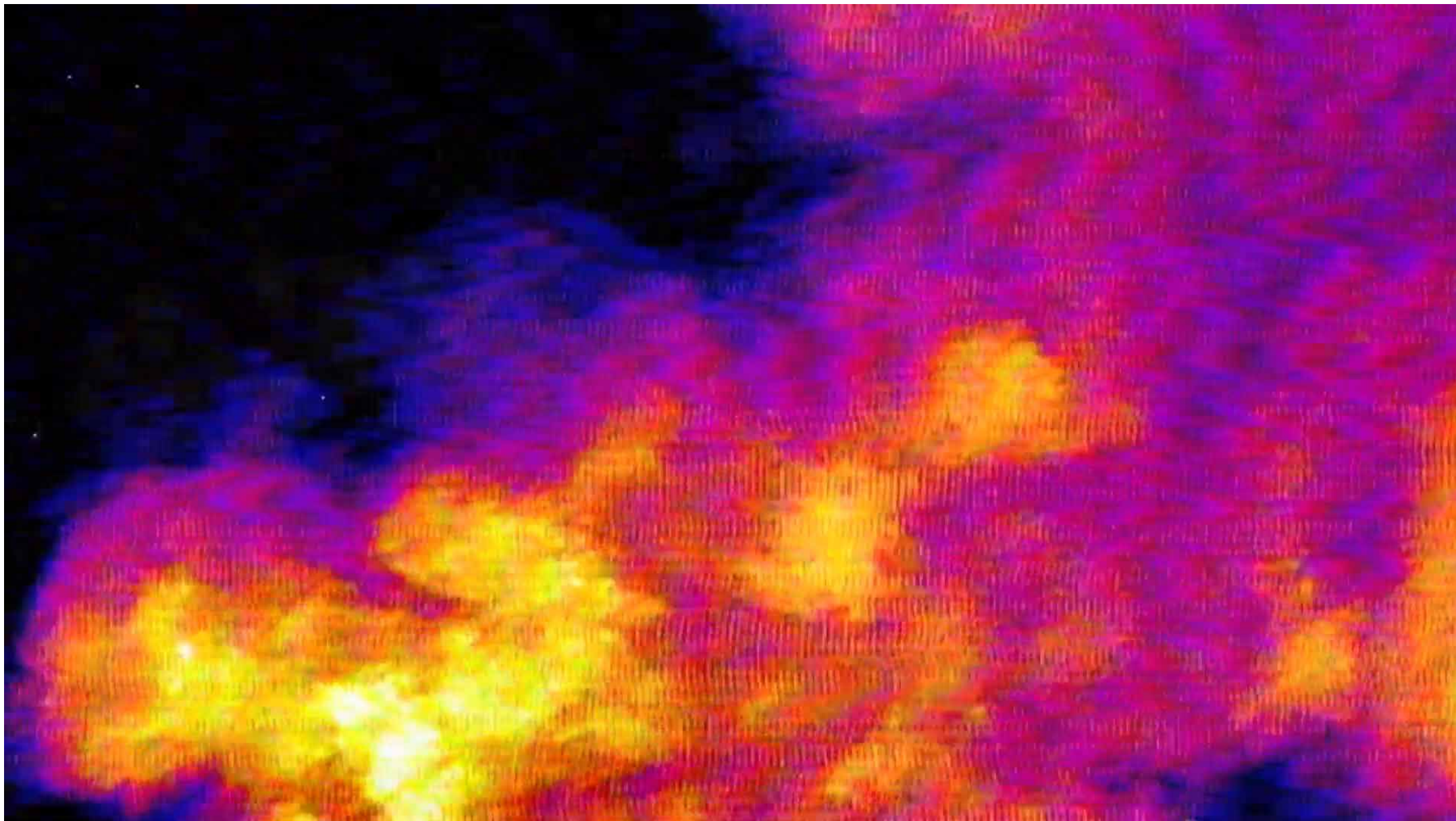
Processing oil shale is harmful for both the local and global environment, however the industry provides employment for numerous people in Eastern part of Estonia as well as enables to retain independence from energy production by other countries. Due sharp rise in price of EU CO2 quotes, the mining operations are becoming unprofitable.

*The Heat* consists documentary video work recorded in diverse places: Oil Shale Competency Center; current and former oil shale mining areas; Technical University of Estonia; Estonian Oil Shale Museum, that is combined with a footage of folk dance group performing a traditional dance in front of a waste mound filmed with thermal camera.

Direct contact with people connected to the industry provides an understanding, why it is hard to change. Thermal footage adds an emotional layer to the work - showing excess energy in form of CO2 disappearing in the dark background or on more minor level being turned into joyous group movements.



Installation in Hobusepea Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2018  
Two person exhibition with Xiaopeng Zhou











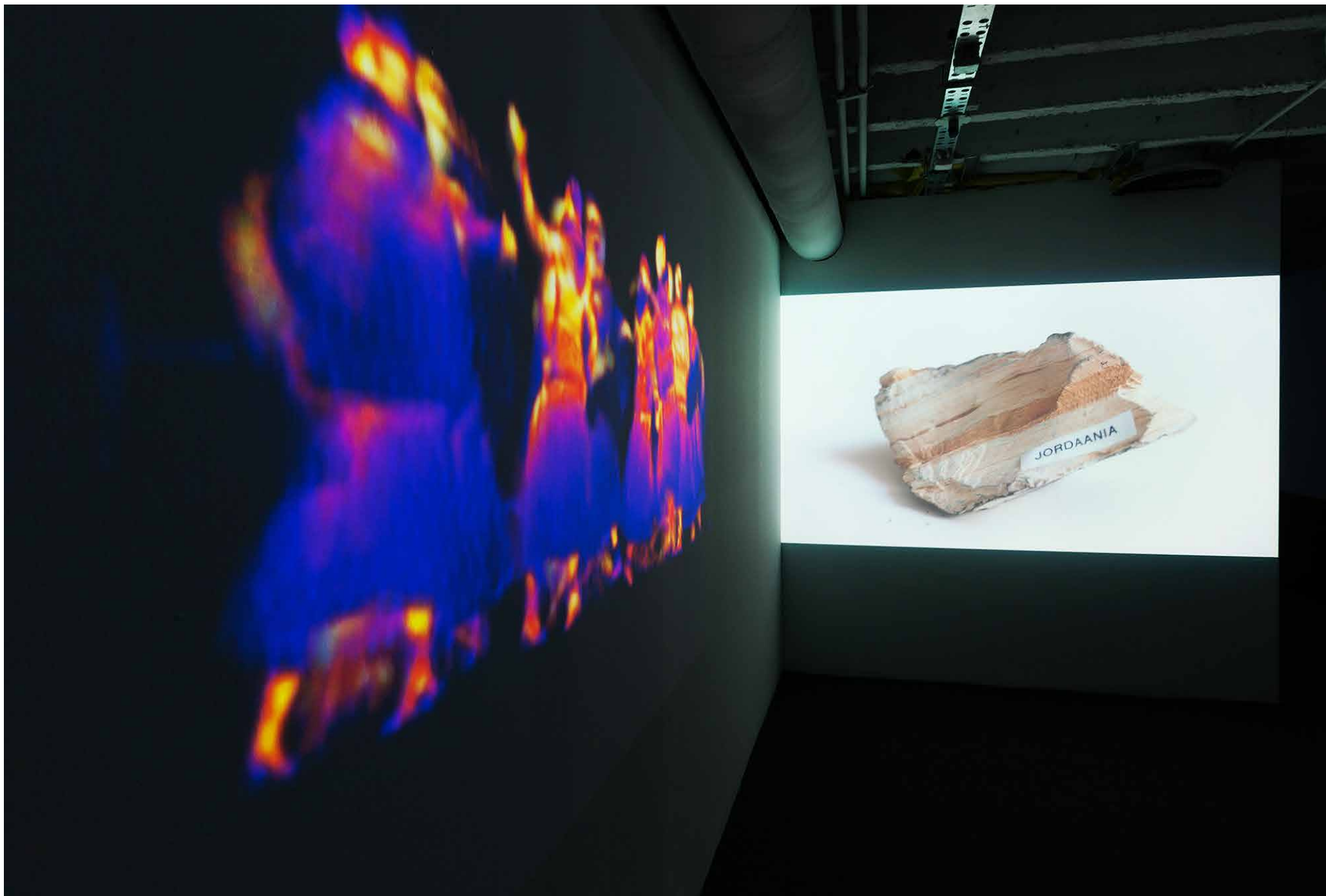












Installation in Cultural Center Belgrade, Serbia, 2019  
Two person exhibition with Predrag Terzić



Installation in Cultural Center Belgrade, Serbia, 2019  
Two person exhibition with Predrag Terzić



# The Miners

Photographic installation

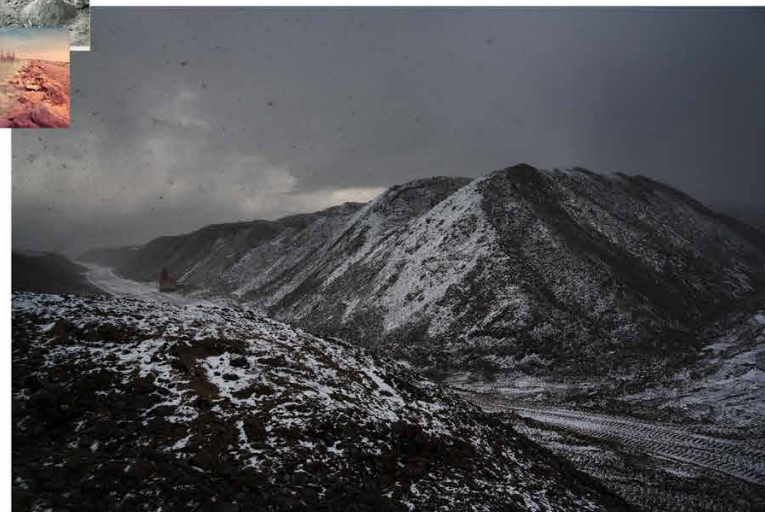
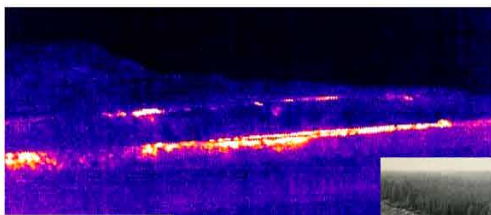
various sizes

2018 - 2022

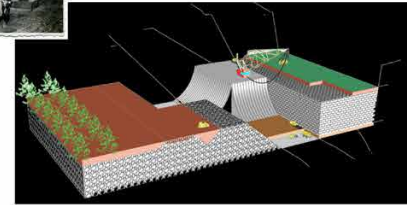
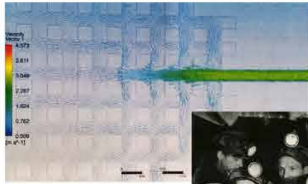
*The Miners* is a continuation of the work, that started in the previous project - *The Heat*.

The work is based on extensive research in Estonian Oil Shale Museum archives. This footage is combined with visual research about the same areas currently - mines, factories and scientific institutions.

Goal of the project is to observe extractive and post extractive landscapes in combination with other imaging technologies - like thermal for example. To concentrate on the physical transformation of landscape and on the hard materiality of energy production.











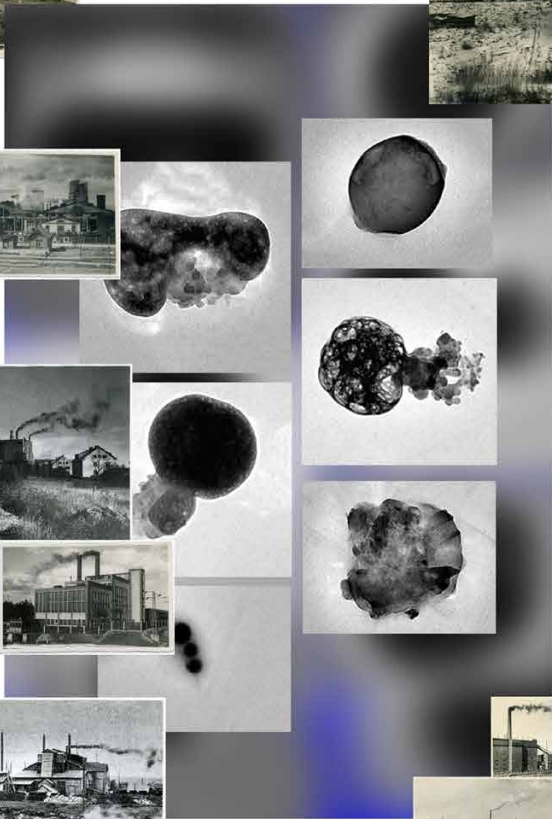
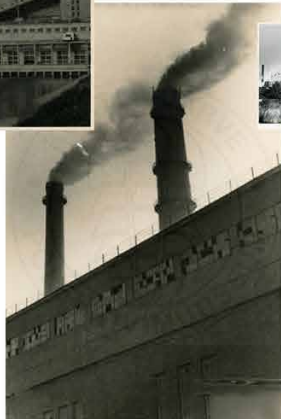








"East Knoll"



# The Flood

Video installation

2018 - 2019

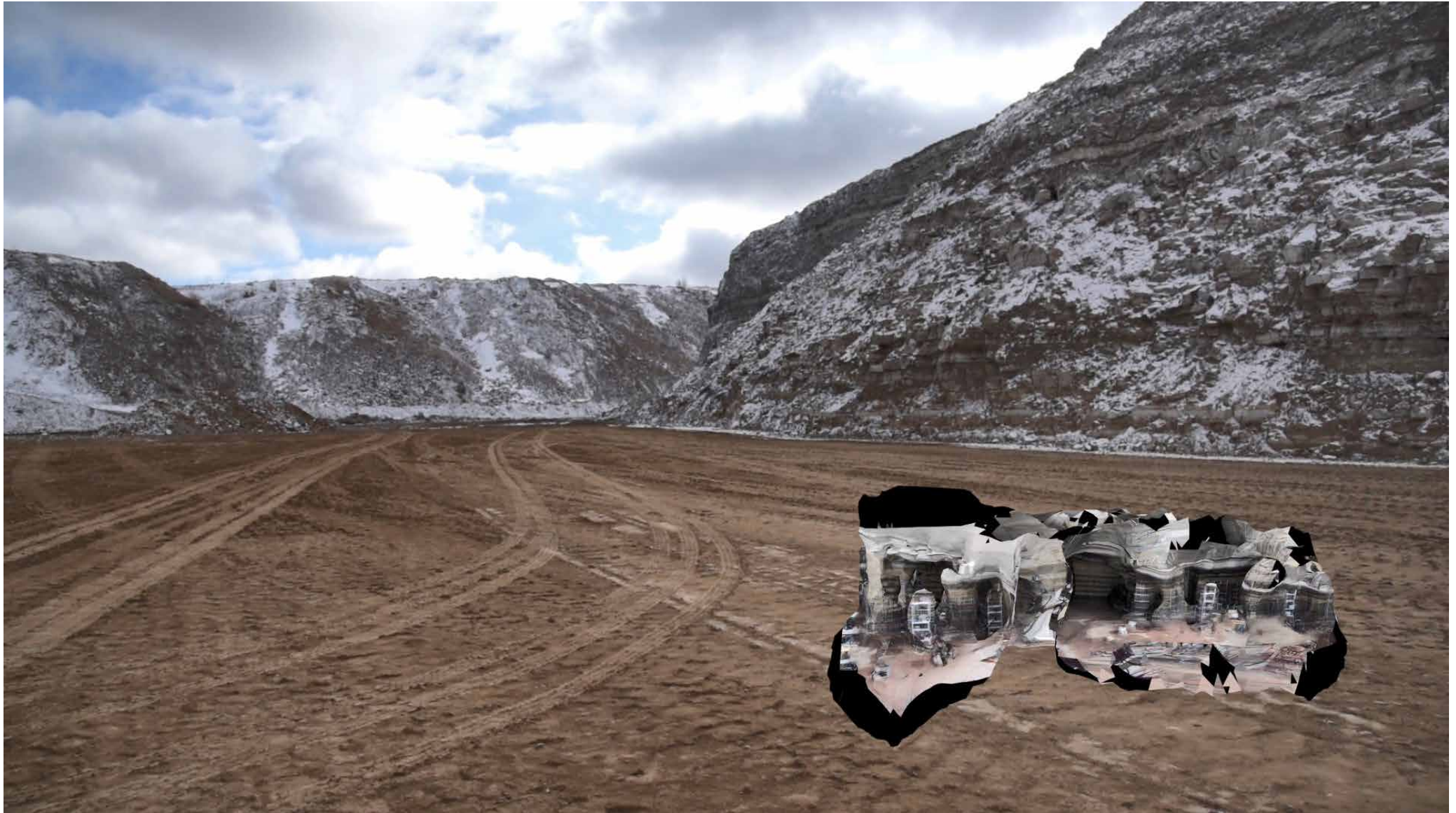
*The Flood* is based on the footage shot in various cryptocurrency "mines" in Estonia. Virtual currency - i.e. Bitcoin - offers an attempt to withdraw from existing financial system, its idea about money as an agreement and the objective to release its production from the central bank's control.

Every attractive idea is inevitably accompanied by the risk that new centers or „bubbles“ will arise. For now the ideal of decentralized monetary system has turned into speculative activity largely influenced by big financial institutions.

Some options of cost-effectiveness are still open and even in Estonia there are several different types of mines, some of which are located in the territories of power stations. It is a calculation made because a vast demand of energy needed to mine virtual currencies.

The work is an installation - a combination of three videos, objects and digital prints. Each part of the work provides a different insight - interviews with "cryptominers"; a continuous shot from one of the biggest crypto mines, located in former women prison; a video combining footage from Estonian oil shale mines with 3D animations.

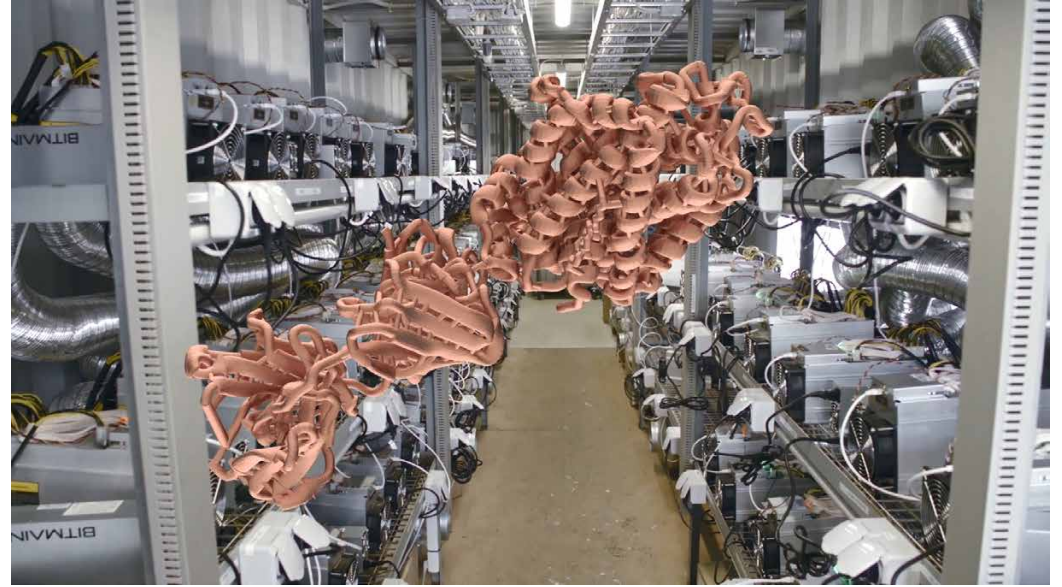




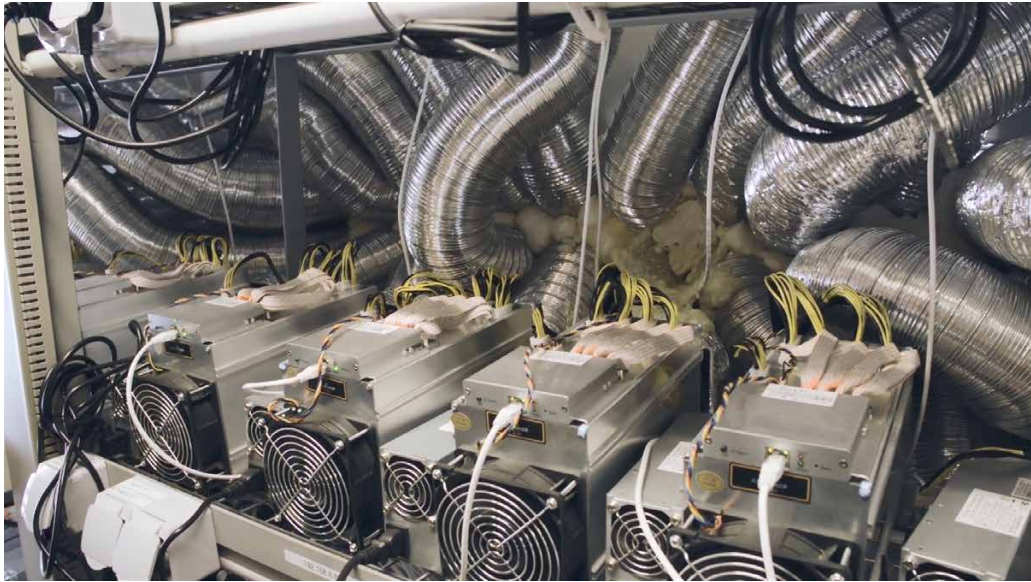
## **The Flood | Two**

FullHD video, 10:15 min, 2018













*The Flood*, installation at #Material 4.0, City Gallery Sindelfingen, 2018





## The Flood | Three

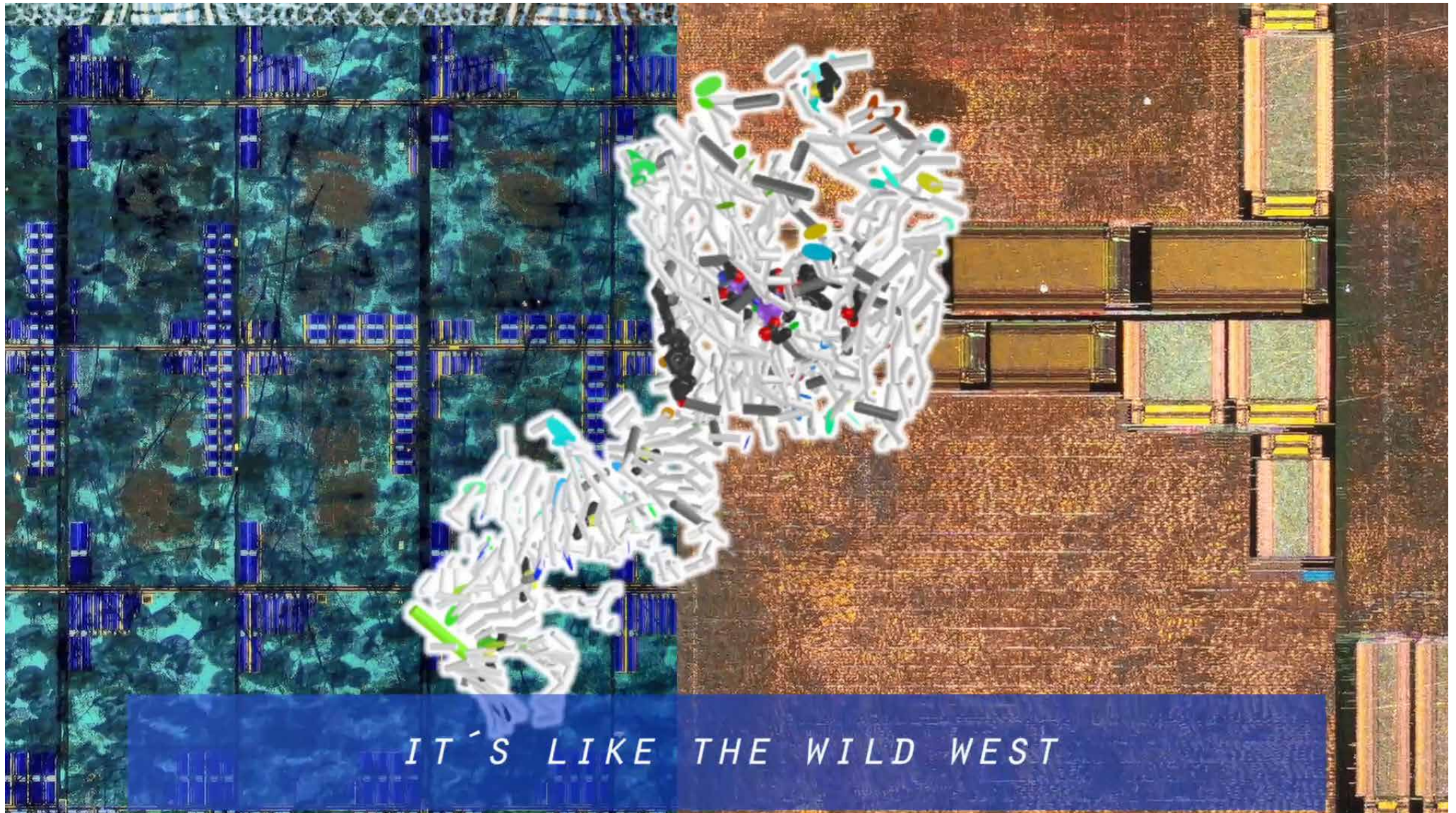
FullHD video, 10:10 min, 2018



*The Flood at Taxed to the Max, Noorderlicht International Photofestival, Groningen, Netherlands, 2019*

*Photography: Hanne van der Velde*

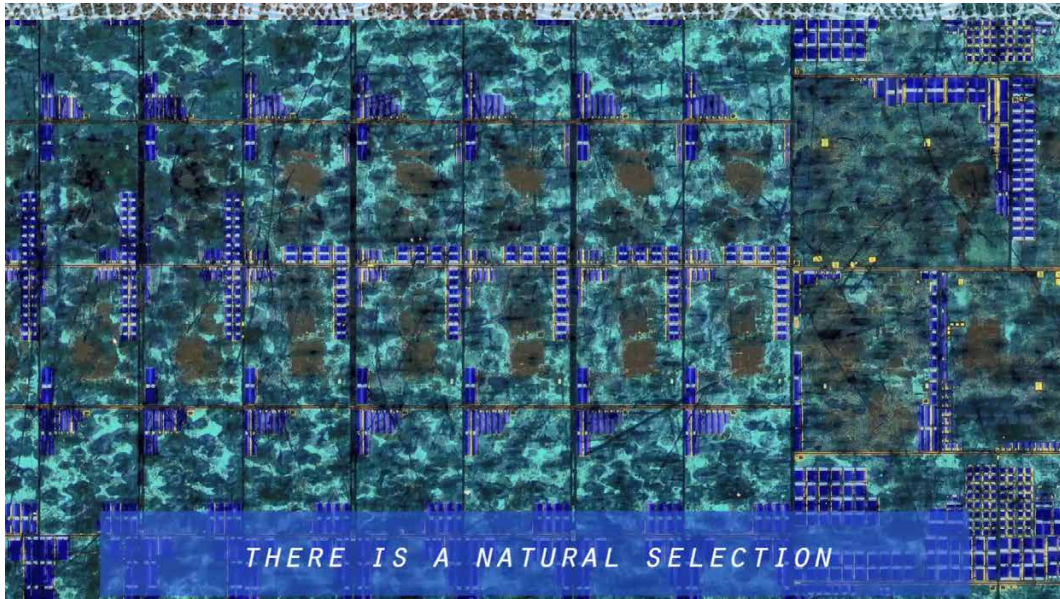




## **The Flood | One**

FullHD video, 10:53 min, 2018





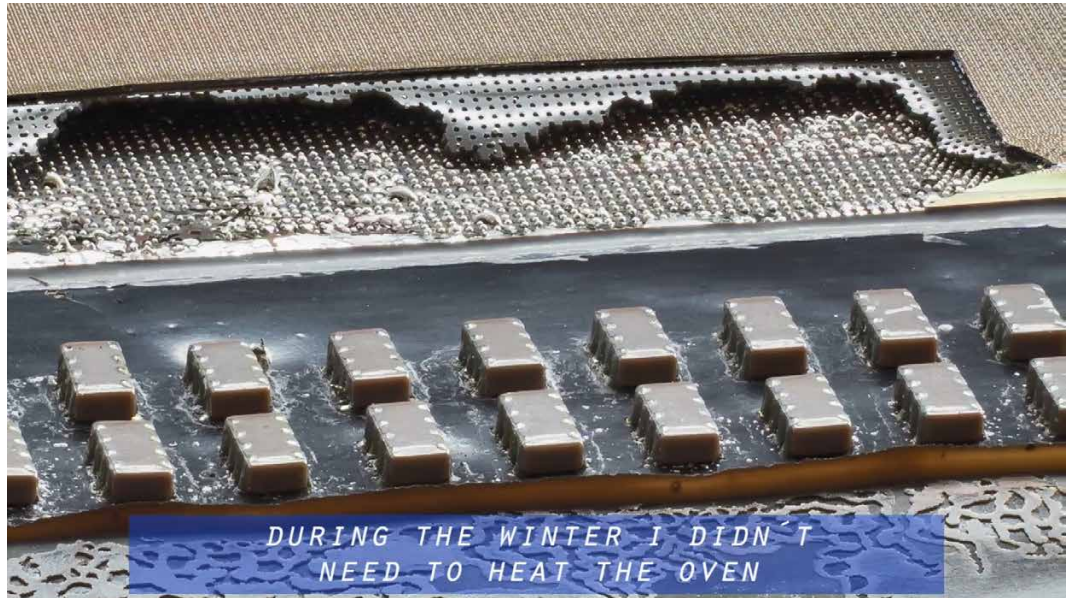
THERE IS A NATURAL SELECTION



I SHUTDOWN TOO



I WOULD PREDICT  
A VERY HIGH RISE



DURING THE WINTER I DIDN'T  
NEED TO HEAT THE OVEN



# Center of Doubt

Artist research

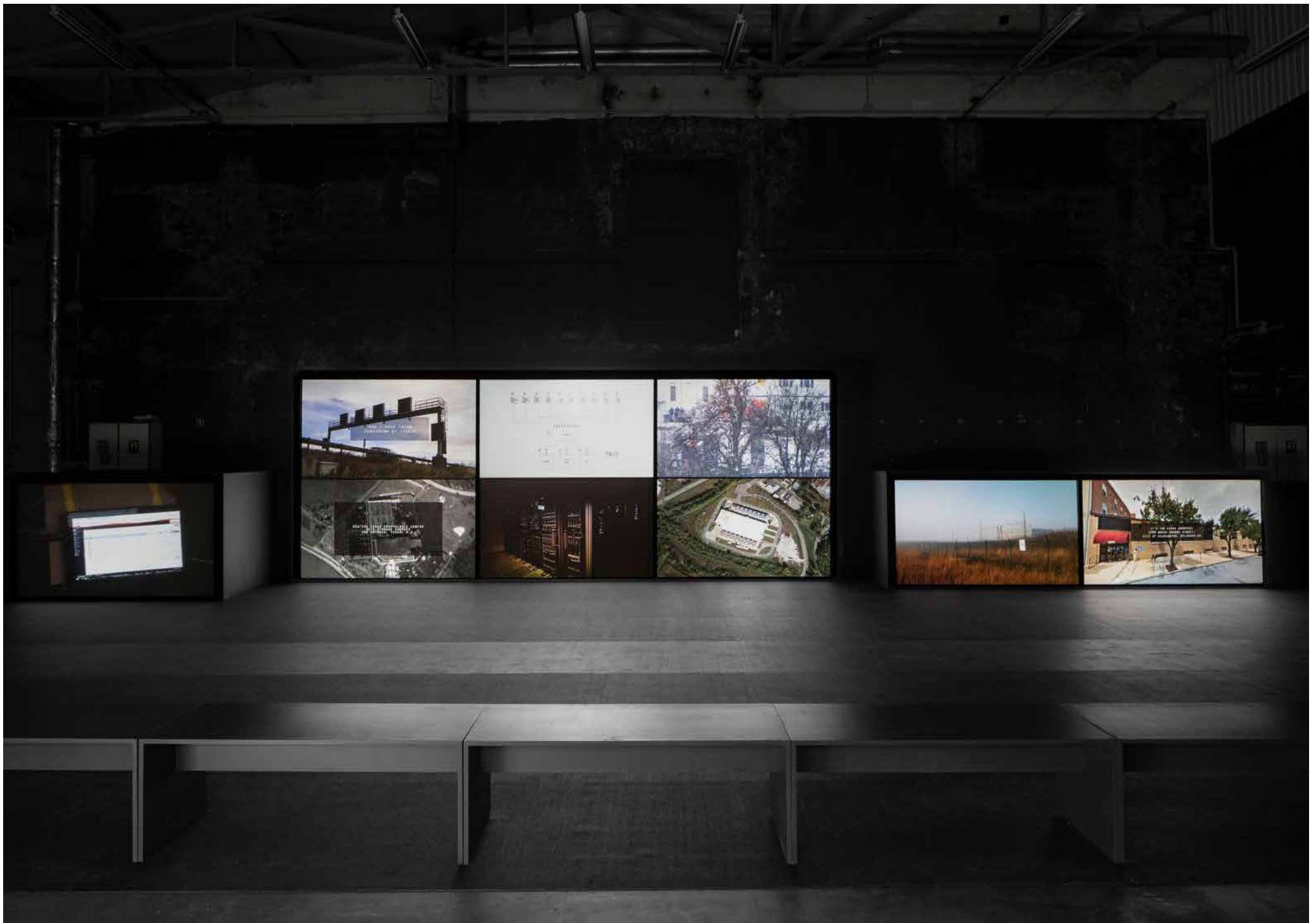
1 to 9 screen video installation

2012 - 2018

*Center of Doubt* was my longest research project so far, which aimed to explore the rise of platform capitalism and debunk the apparent immateriality of information technology

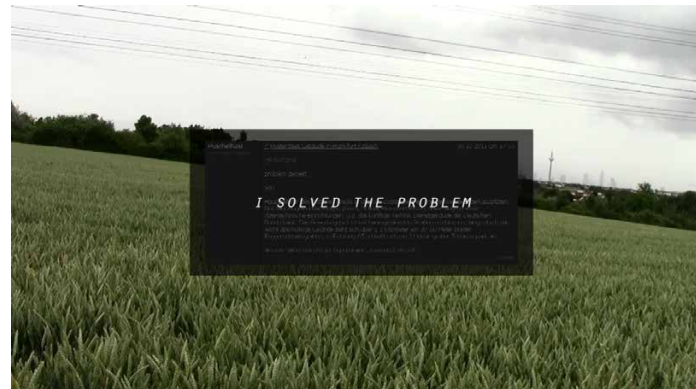
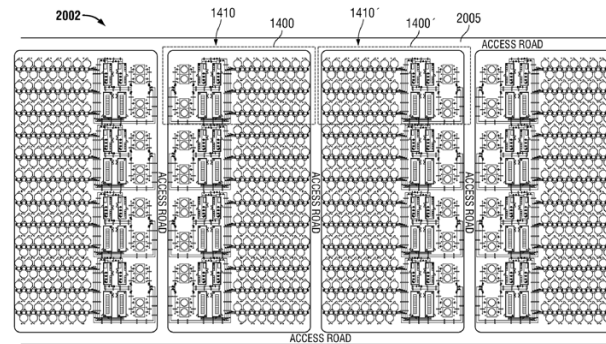
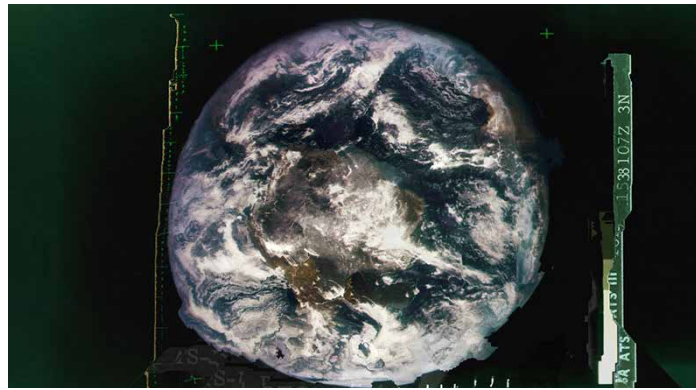
On the one hand, the research was concentrated on specific places that are necessary for the existence of the “ubiquitous” Internet. On the other hand, it was an attempt to offer an alternative visual approach to topics related to “personal technology”.

The work was completed at a time when there was a transition to centralized platforms that mediate access to information. This era is directly related to the cloud computing - all data and control over it is no longer in personal computers, but in the data centers, owned and operated by large corporations.



*Center of Doubt in Riga Biennial, Riga, Latvia, 2018*





**Center of Doubt** consists nine video works:

1. *Crystal Travels*; 2. *Crystal Computing* (Google. Inc., St. Ghislain); 3. *High-Tech-Fort-Knox*; 4. *Formation of Clouds*;
5. *ECHELON*; 6. *Die Grenze zwischen Morgen und Gestern*; 7. *Patent Application Data*; 8. *Mysterious Building*; 9. *BTC.EE*





*Center of Doubt at 5th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art  
in Trekhgornaya Manufaktura, Russia, 2016*





**Crystal Computing (Google Inc., St. Ghislain)**

Video / Installation, FullHD 09:19 min, 2015



***Crystal Computing (Google Inc., St. Ghislain)*** is a video-based investigation about Google's data center in St. Ghislain, Belgium. After being rejected to visit the data center officially, I made a secret research trip to Belgium. DIY surveillance material origins from the surroundings of a huge industrial complex collected during four days. It is Google's biggest data center in Europe.

The work is an attempt to go beyond the white search screen. To concentrate on the material and local importance of the industry, that is often hidden under 'cloudy' PR rhetoric.

The site, that was named on the signs as *Crystal Computing* led my interest to secret policies and eventually to tax avoidance network of the company.







*Crystal Computing (Google Inc. St. Ghislain) video still*

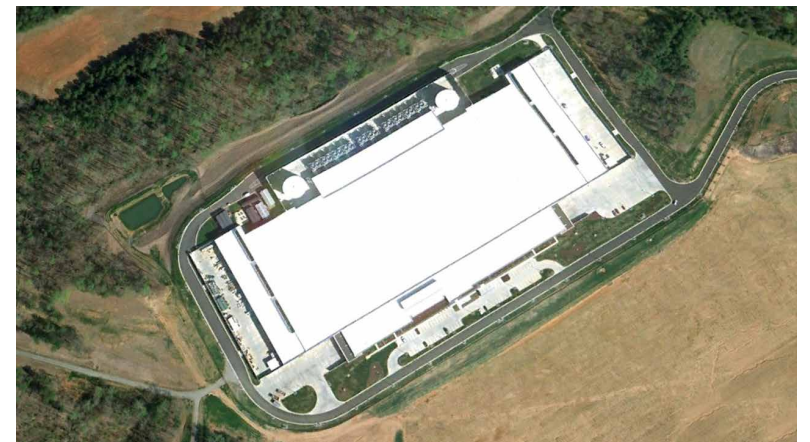
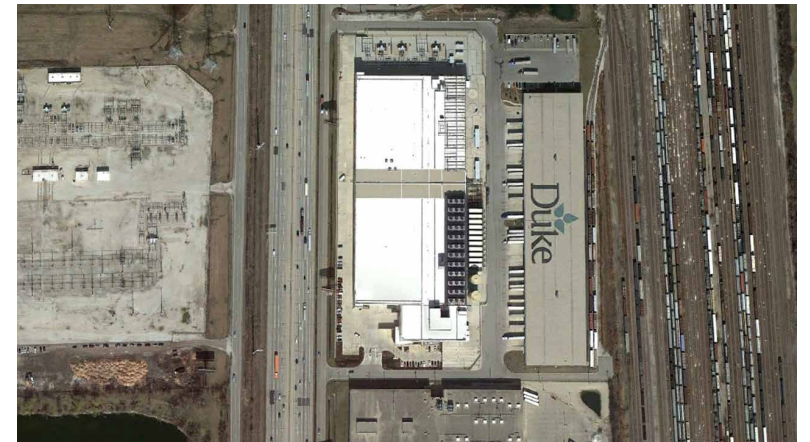
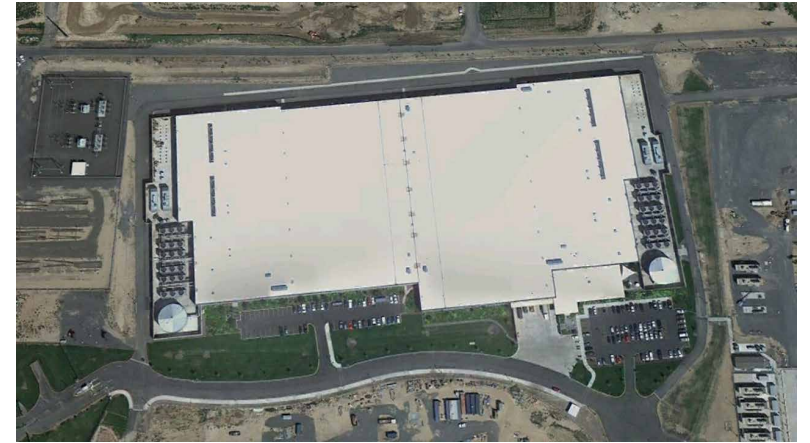


## Formation Of Clouds | Center Of Doubt

FullHD Video 06:28 min  
2014/2018

*Formation of Clouds* depicts the formation of data centers through satellite images. They are owned by the world's leading digital companies like Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, Google and Amazon.

The activities of these global network companies lead to highly centralized Internet access. *Formation of Clouds* reveals the competition between companies to gain the best possible position in running the basic underlying informational infrastructure of everyday life.







**Crystal Travels | Center Of Doubt**

FullHD Video 08:28 min, 2016/2018



*Center of Doubt* in Edith-Russ-Haus, Oldenburg, Germany, 2015





*The Opening Ceremony (High-Tech-Fort-Knox), digital print, 60x90 cm*



*Center of Doubt* at Open Codes in ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany, 2017



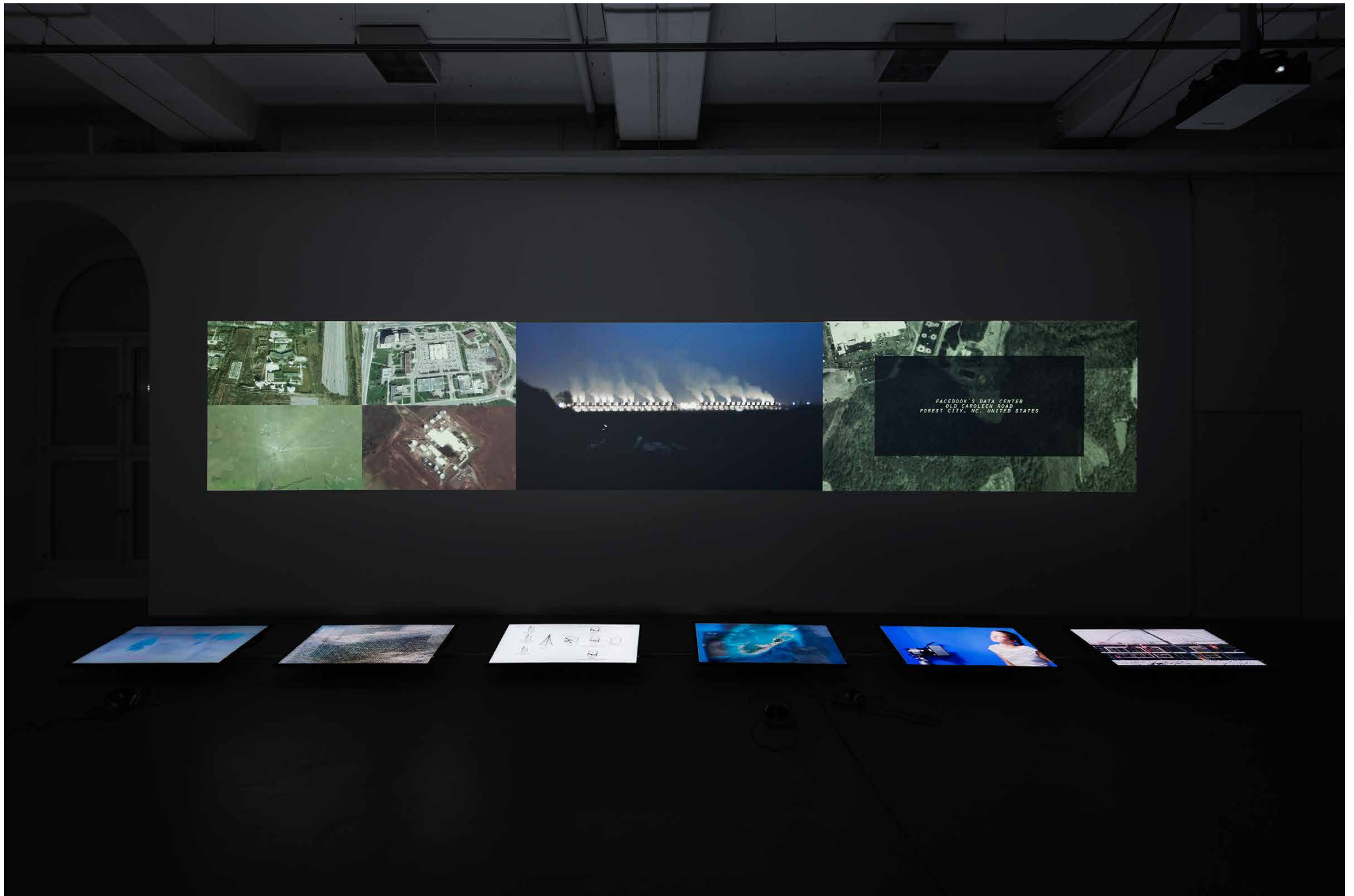
## Die Grenze Zwischen Morgen Und Gestern

FullHD video, 12:44, 2015

The work starts with a chronological overview on the genealogy of surveillance infrastructure. From 1943 the video follows the development of satellite coverage and listening stations, which are designed to gather information sent by the satellites.

Comparison between former East German surveillance station in Brocken, Harz and still working complex in Bad Aibling, operated by BND serve as examples on technological race between Eastern and Western powers.





*Center of Doubt at Monitoring* in Kunstverein Kassel, Germany, 2015



# Eternal Interests

Installation

2016 - 2018

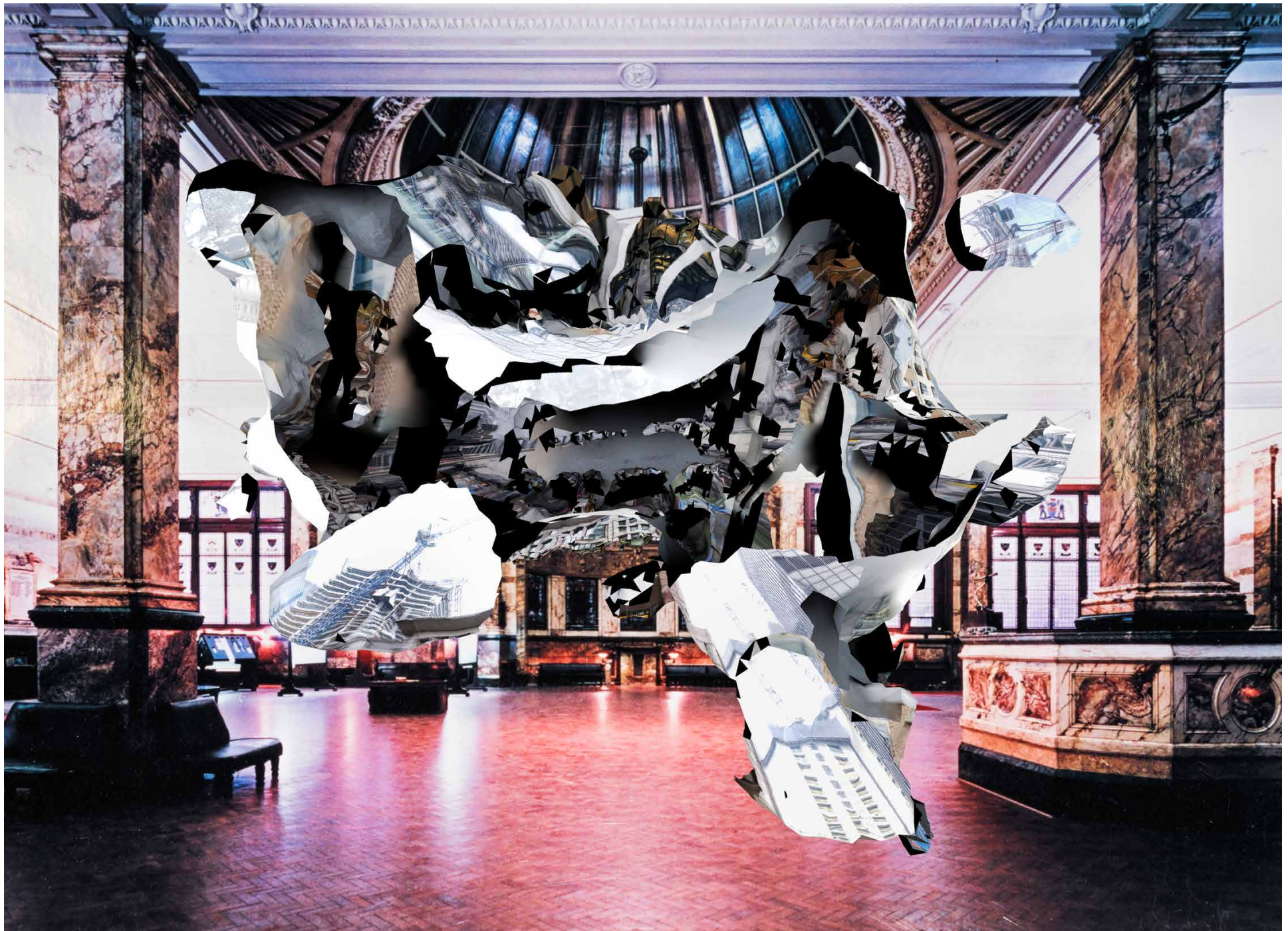
Through a research about Baltic Exchange's former building, its fate and impacts of its removal I'm concentrating on architecture and values represented through it. The house was built 1903 in neoclassical style to the center of London and destroyed 1992 by Provisional IRA's biggest car bomb to the date.

After the bombing there were plans to attach parts of the Baltic Exchange to a new building in the same location. Before dismantling it was fully documented and catalogued. Eventually real estate developers won the dispute with conservationists and Foster and Partners iconic „Gherkin“ - Swiss Re's building was constructed in the former site.

2006 two Estonian businessmen bought the facade and parts of the trade hall wanting it to be rebuilt in Tallinn. The stones were sent to Estonia, where they have stayed in shipping containers over 10 years.

By contrasting premodernist and -world war architecture with contemporary London I question the change in perception about architecture. Probably from long lasting manifestation in stone to functional branding object of speculation.

The work consists 3-channel video installation - *Our Word Our Bond, Architecture of the Sky and From F to F*; spatial installation, that includes two wooden boxes - an original from the 1996 and its replica, borrowed remains of the building and OSB plates; digital prints in various sizes and a sound installation.



1903/2018 (*Eternal Interests*), digital print, 50 x 70 cm, 2018

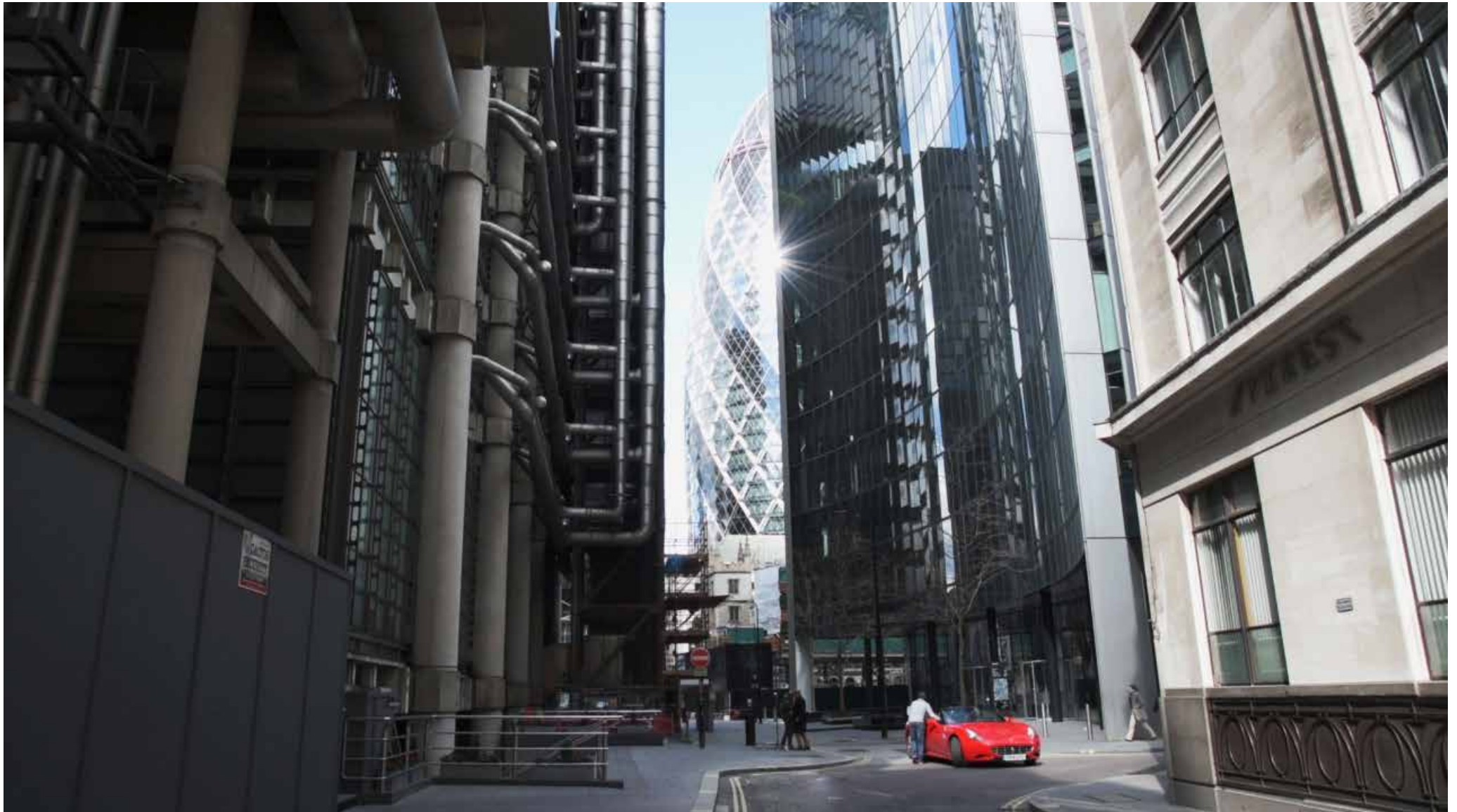




*Eternal Interests*, installation at the solo exhibition in Tallinn Art Hall Gallery, Estonia 2018

Photo: Karel Koplímets





## **Our Word Our Bond**

FullHD video  
13:35 min  
2017

The film is a journey of tracing the former Baltic Exchange's building and its fate in Tallinn and London, which leads to unpredictable outcomes.

For example – terrorist attack being economic consideration; real estate boom in London; redesign of city space by incorporating anti attack measures; remains of the building being stored in 40 shipping containers; and many failed acts of communication.



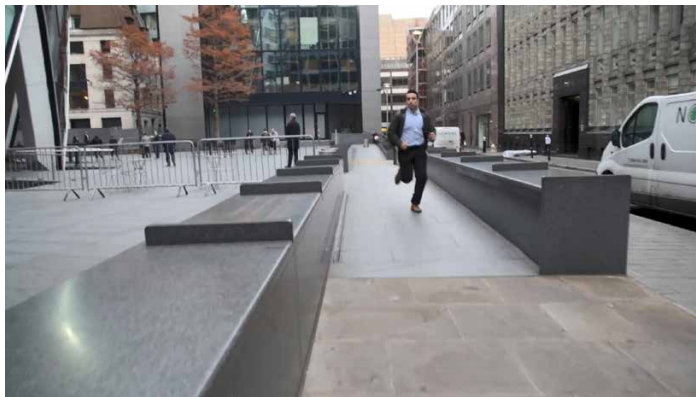


Historic England. It is extremely rare to dismantle and relocate a listed building.

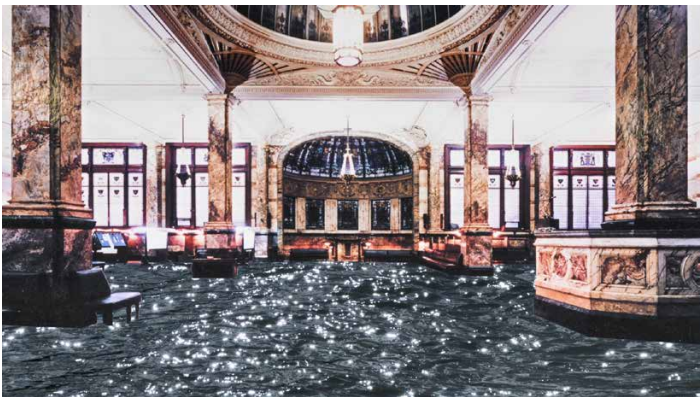
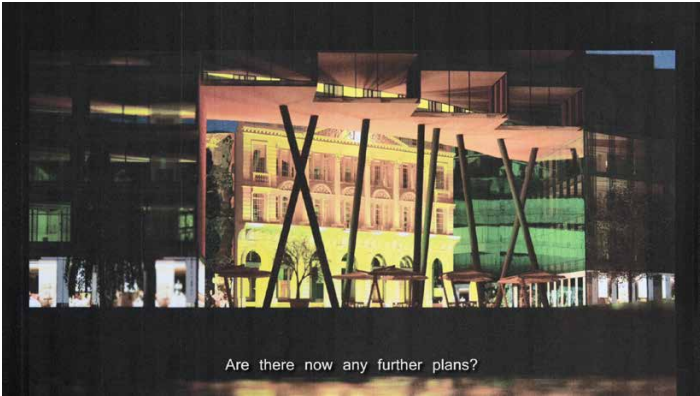


This is speculative development for maximum profit.

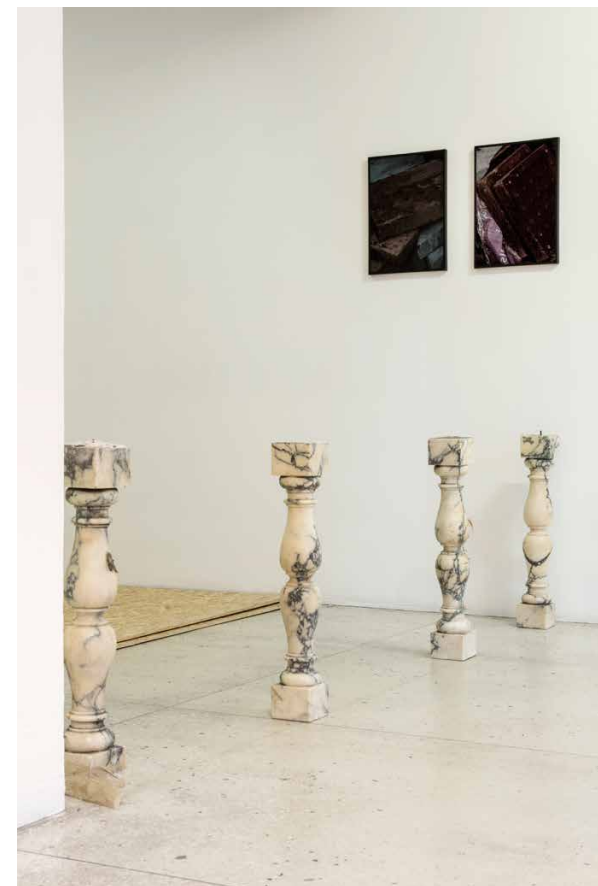






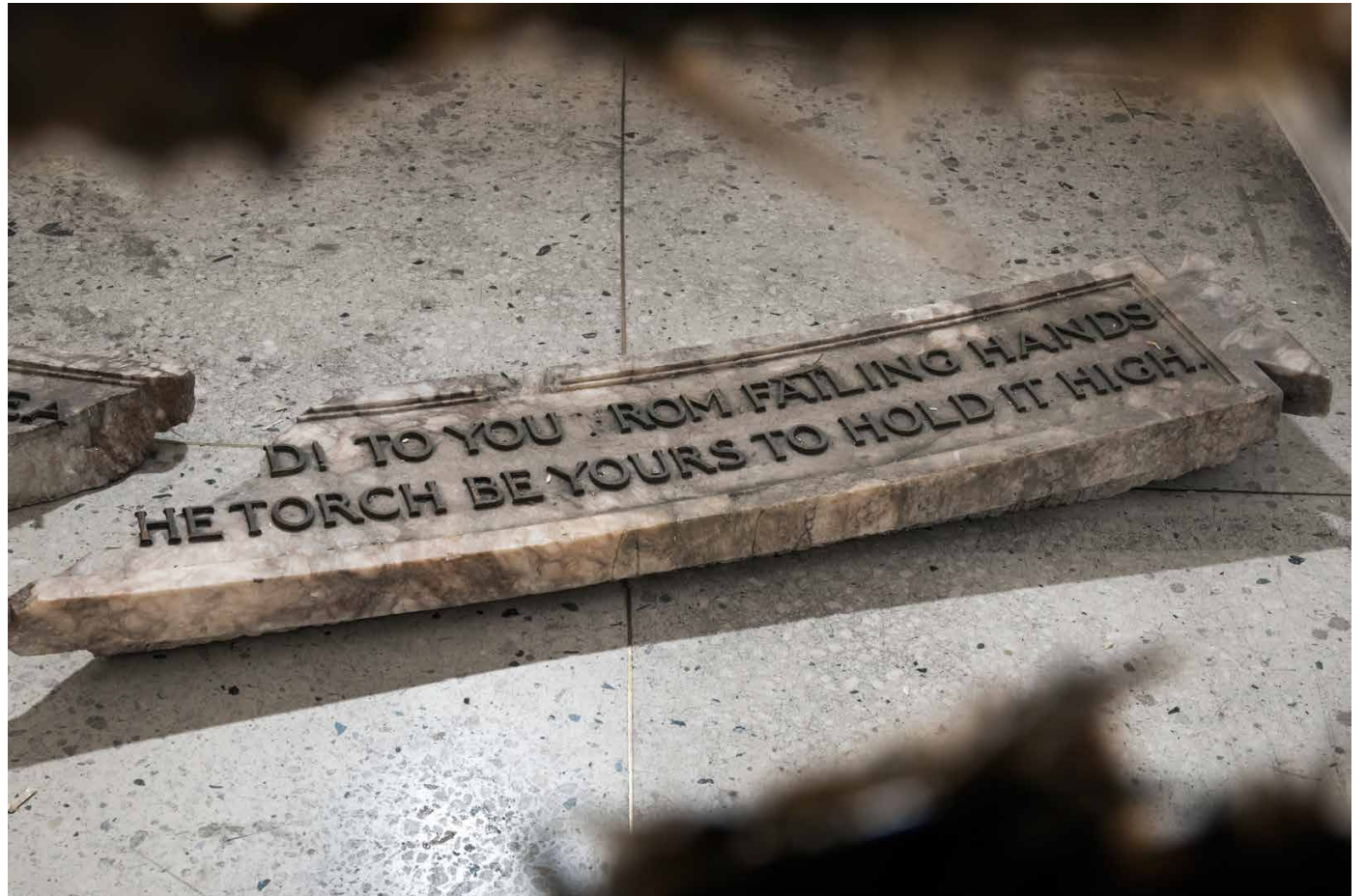


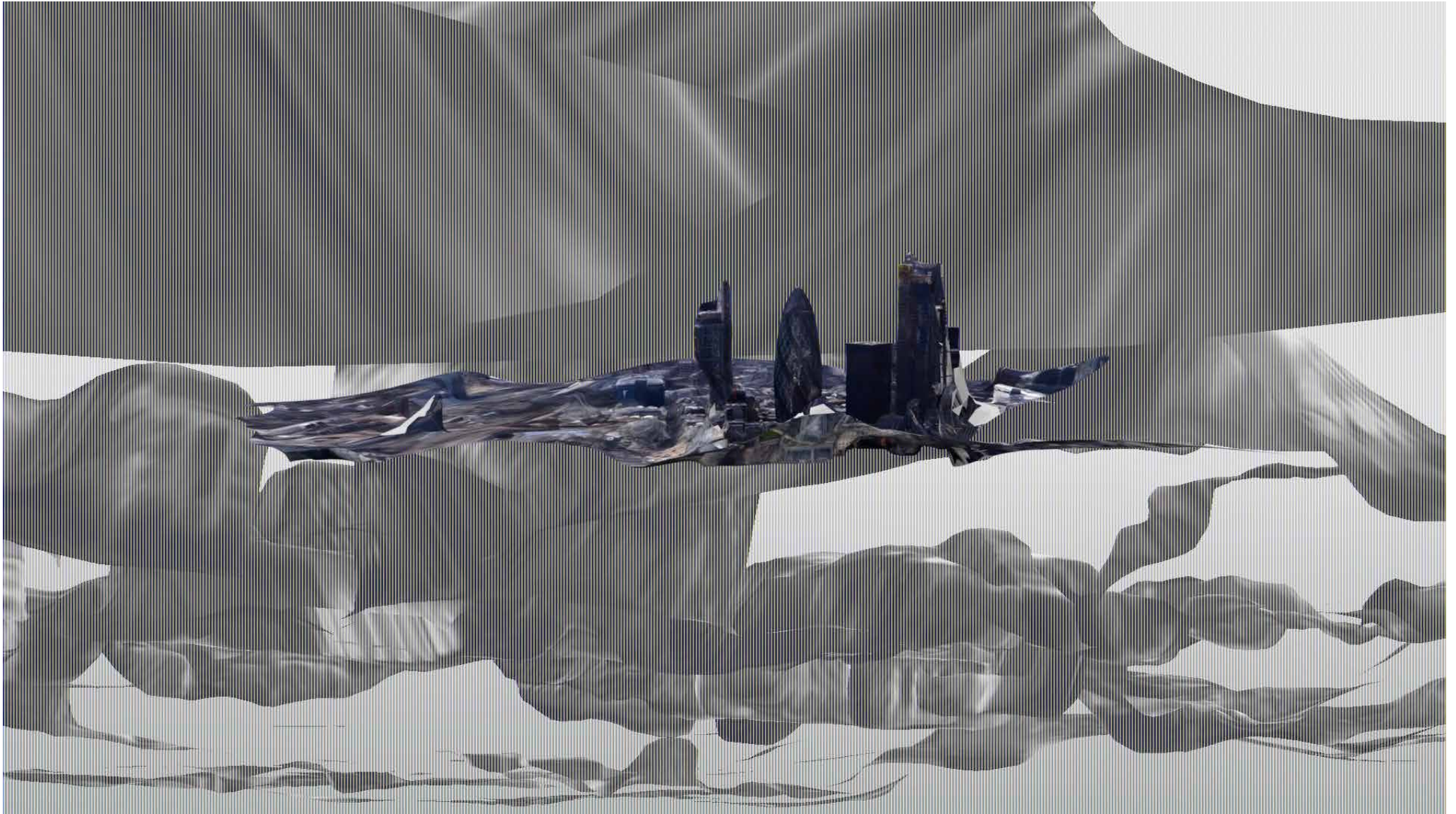




*Eternal Interests*, installation at the solo exhibition in  
Tallinn Art Hall Gallery, Estonia 2018



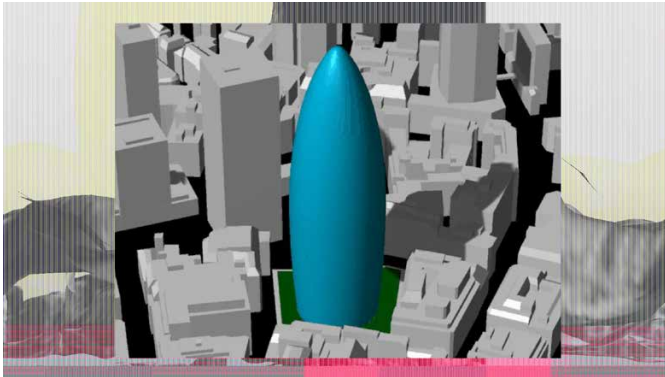
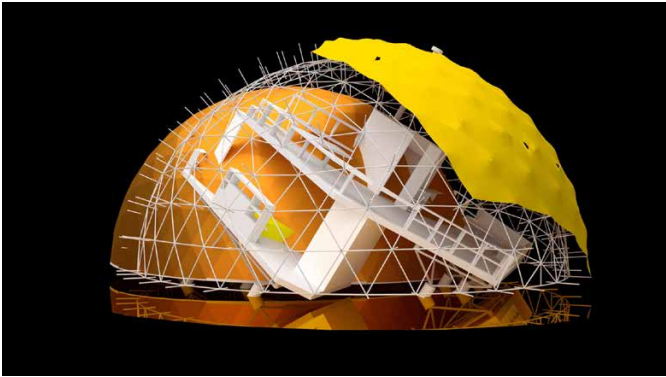
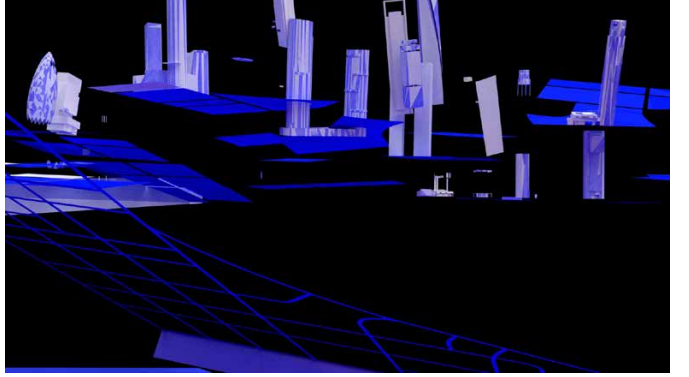
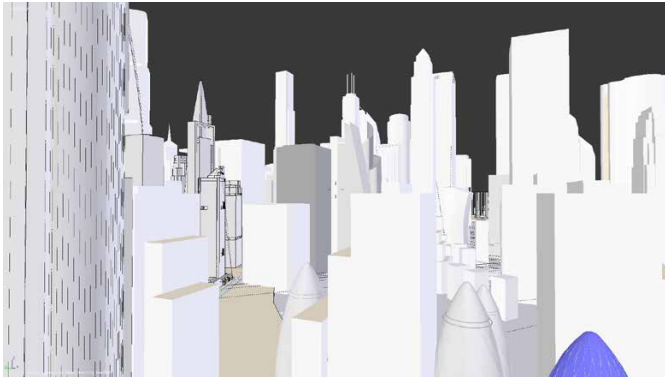
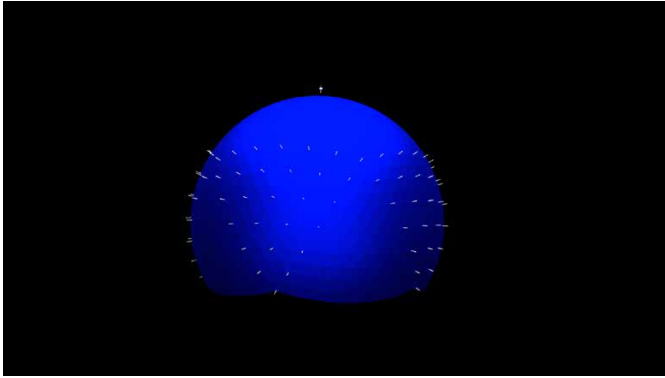
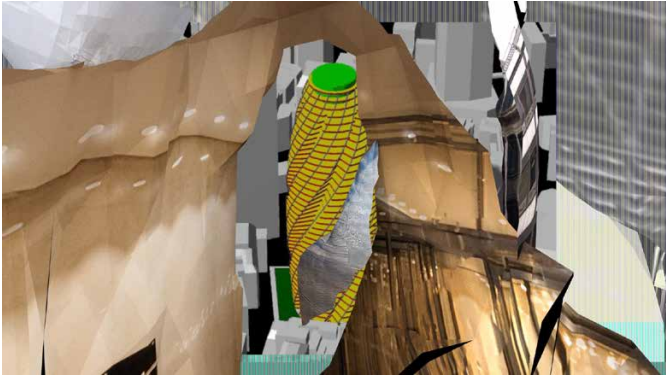




## **From F To F**

FullHD video, 07:14 min, 2018



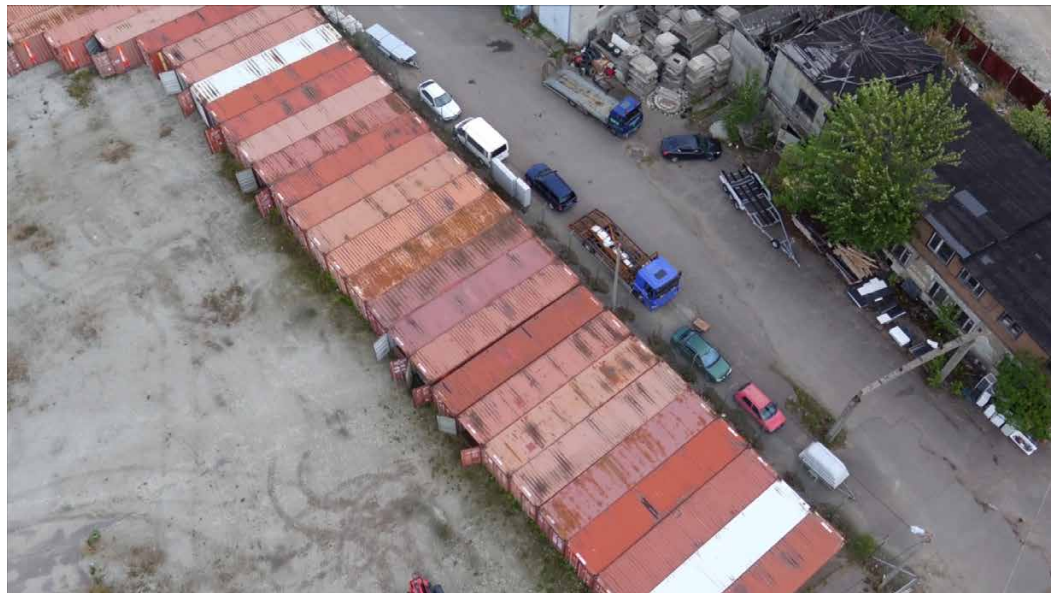
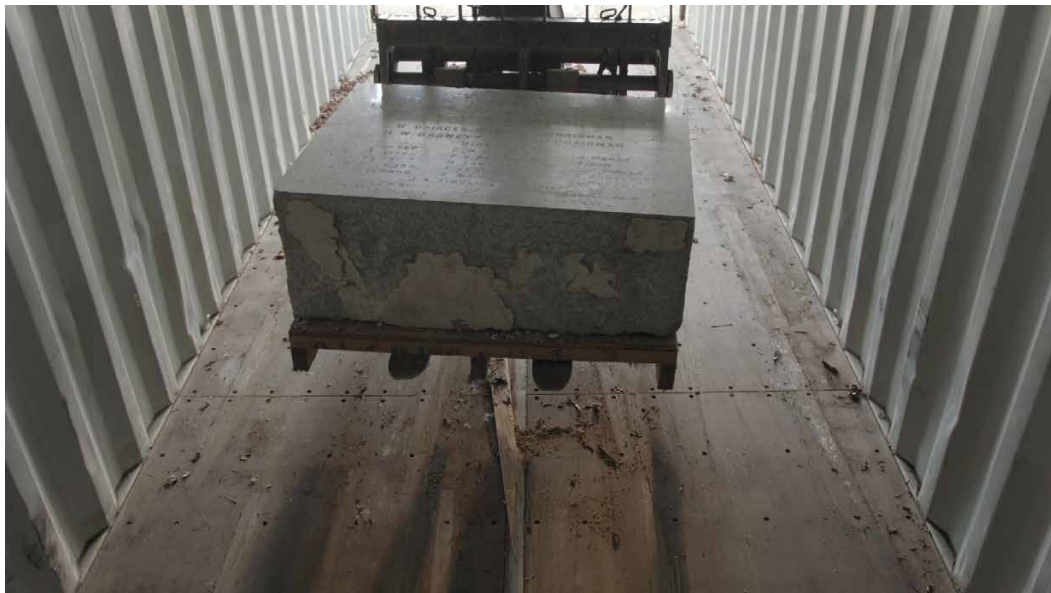




*Eternal Interests*, installation at the solo exhibition in Tallinn Art Hall Gallery, Estonia 2018

Photo: Karel Koplimets





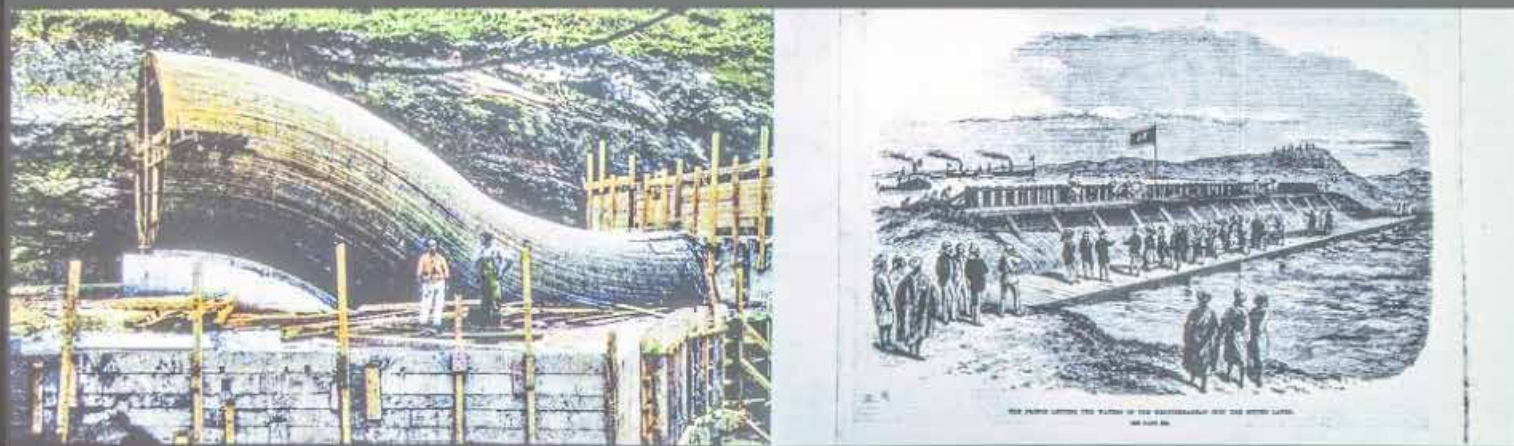
## Architecture Of The Sky

4K video, 05:23 min, 2018



*Replica at Archeology of a Screen, Art Museum of Estonia, 2018*





*Gravity's Infinite Range* at Venice Architecture Biennale in Baltic Pavillion, Italy, 2016



*Free Zone at Venice Architecture Biennale in Baltic Pavillion, Italy, 2016*





975203 kW at solo exhibition *Tender Salute*, Galerie im Turm, Berlin, 2015

# IAS

Research | Installation  
Video and photography  
2020 - ...

The ongoing research is composed of three case studies about invasive plants in Europe. *Prunus serotina* - Black Cherry, *Ailanthus altissima* - Tree of Heaven and *Heracleum sosnowskyi* - Sosnowskyi hogweed offer insights about human - ecosystem relations. The work focuses on question: how general perception about nature can change from cheap resource to invasive, toxic, at the same time same time vulnerable multitude set of relations between widest range of organisms?

*IAS* video installation, as well images are based on documentary footage recorded by myself. This is combined with other visual material (scientific images, images from foresters, etc.), that is gathered through dialogue with individuals, who work in the field of invasive plants.

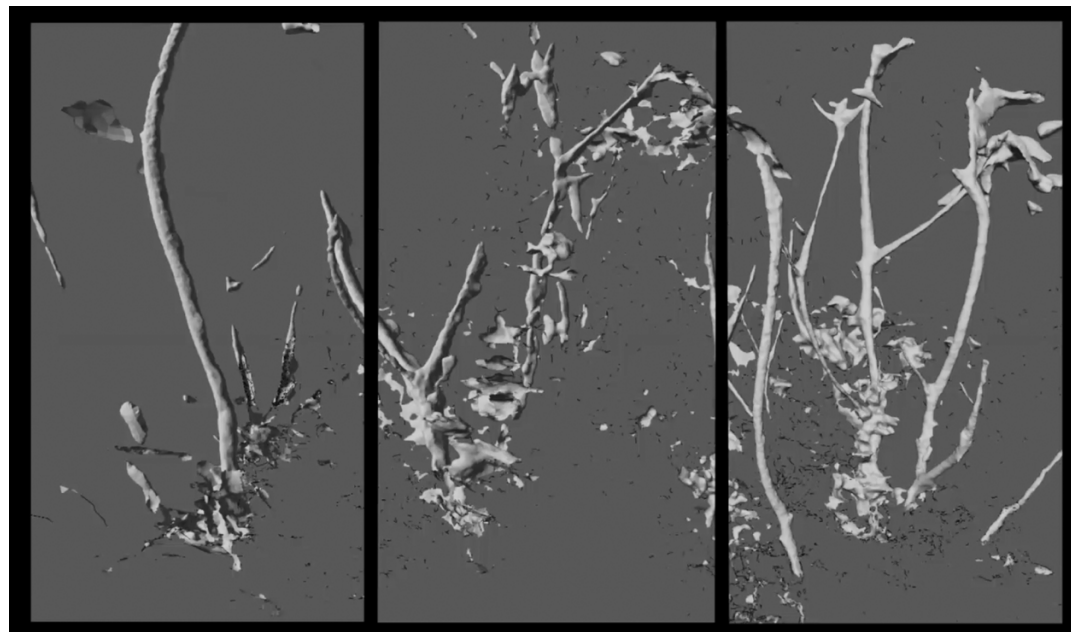
The documentary material is combined with computer generated simulations of processes, that cannot be captured in the real environment.

The video work is conceptualized through recorded conversations - with biologists, nature conservationists, scientists who work with EU invasive species lists and guidelines, foresters and other individuals, who lead a campaign against invasive species will be combined with sound recordings from environments the plants grow.











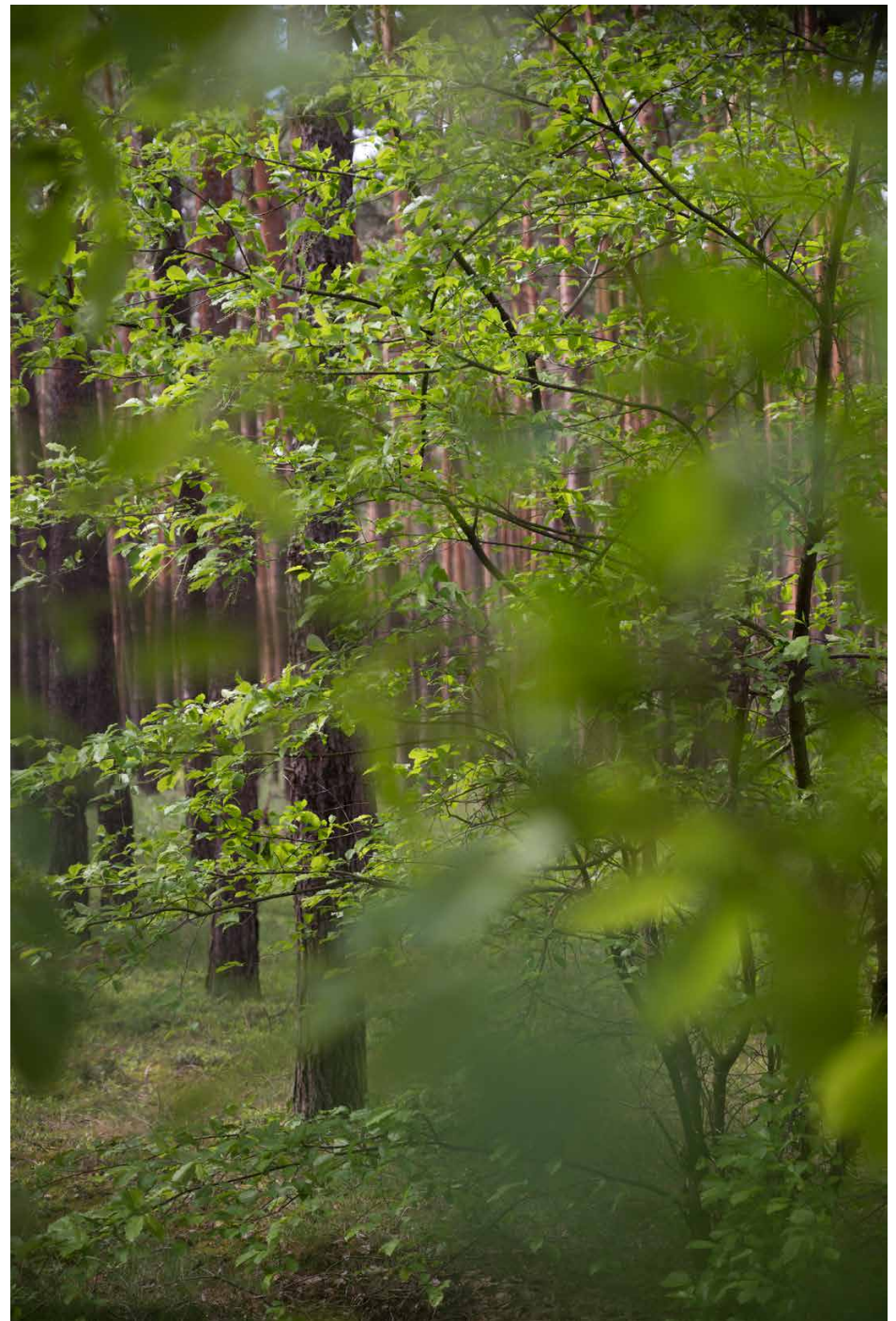


*Exponential (IAS)*, installation at solo exhibition in AV17 Gallery, Vilnius, 2021



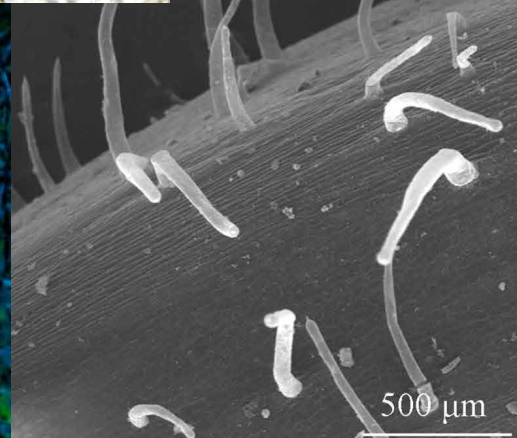
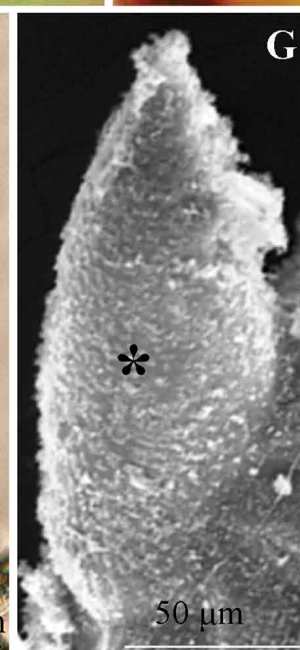
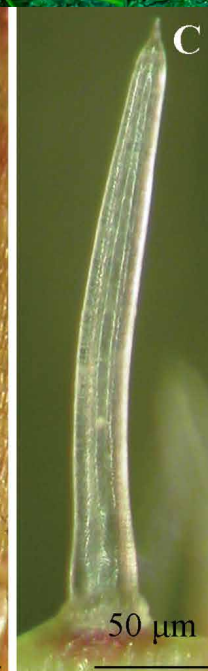
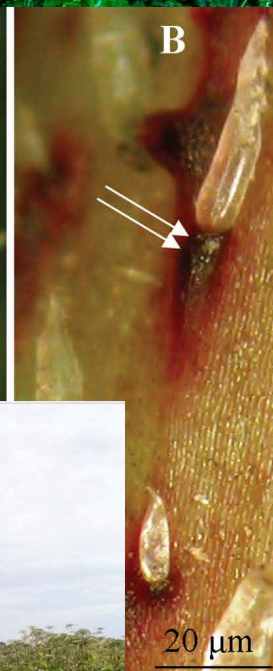
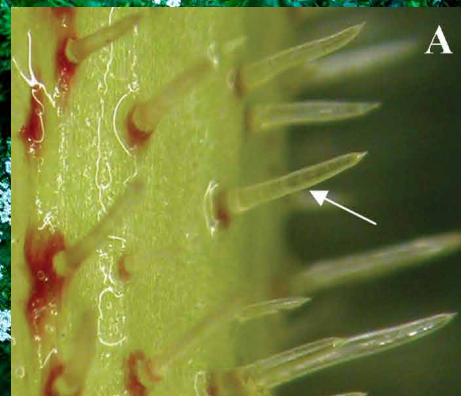
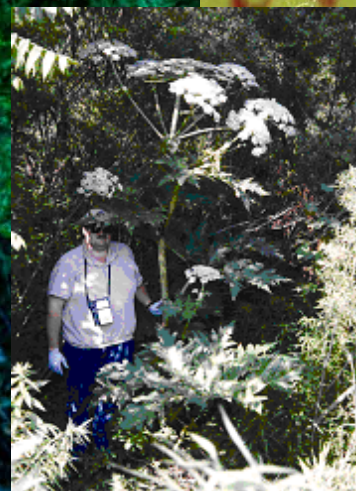


*Prunus padus* | Native, photography, 2021



*Prunus serotina* | Invasive Alien, photography, 2021







# UNIVERSALS I

Digital prints on paper and textile  
Various sizes  
2019 - ...

The work is based on old medical drawings and on various patent diagrams about human behaviour, its prediction, as well relation to environment.

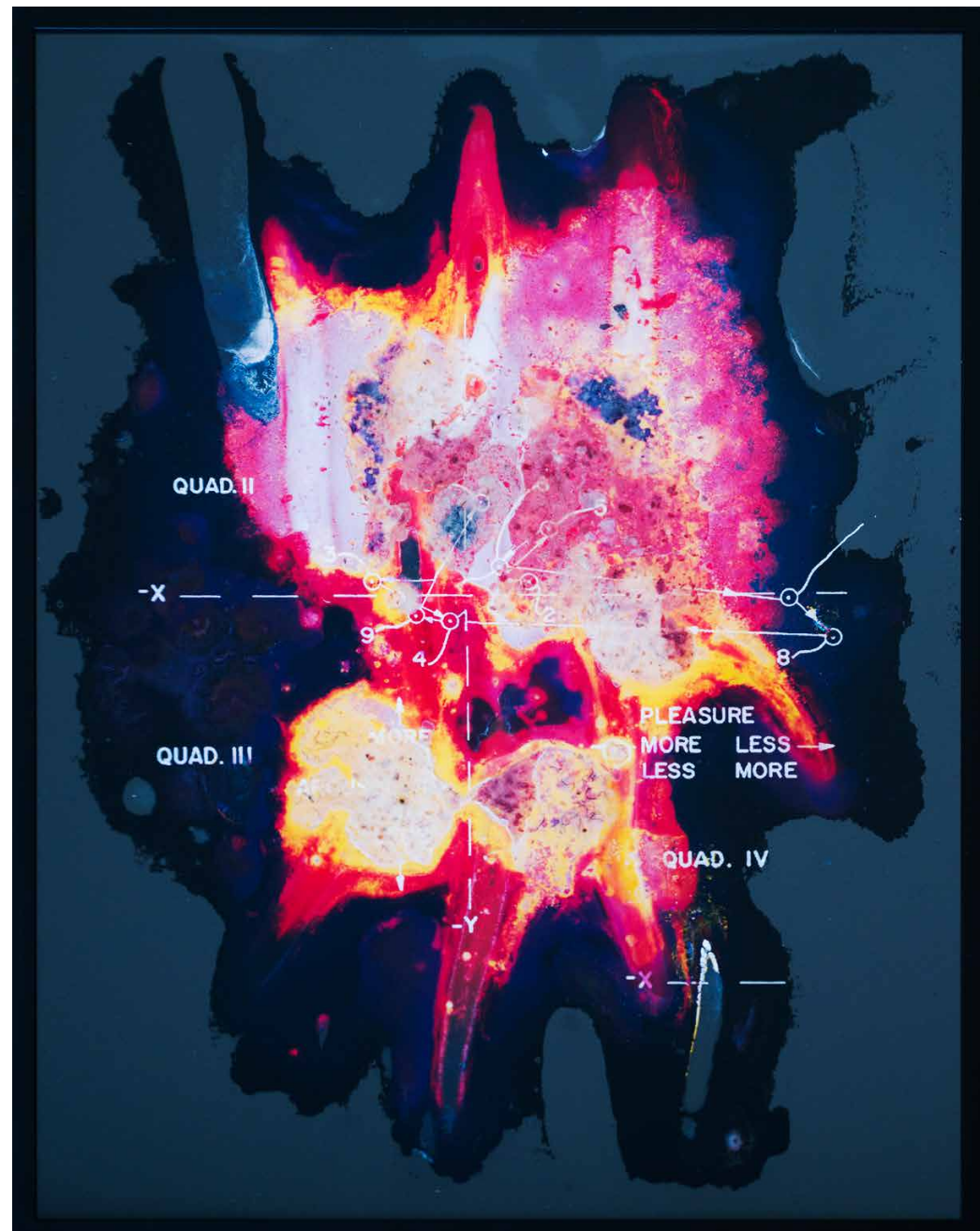
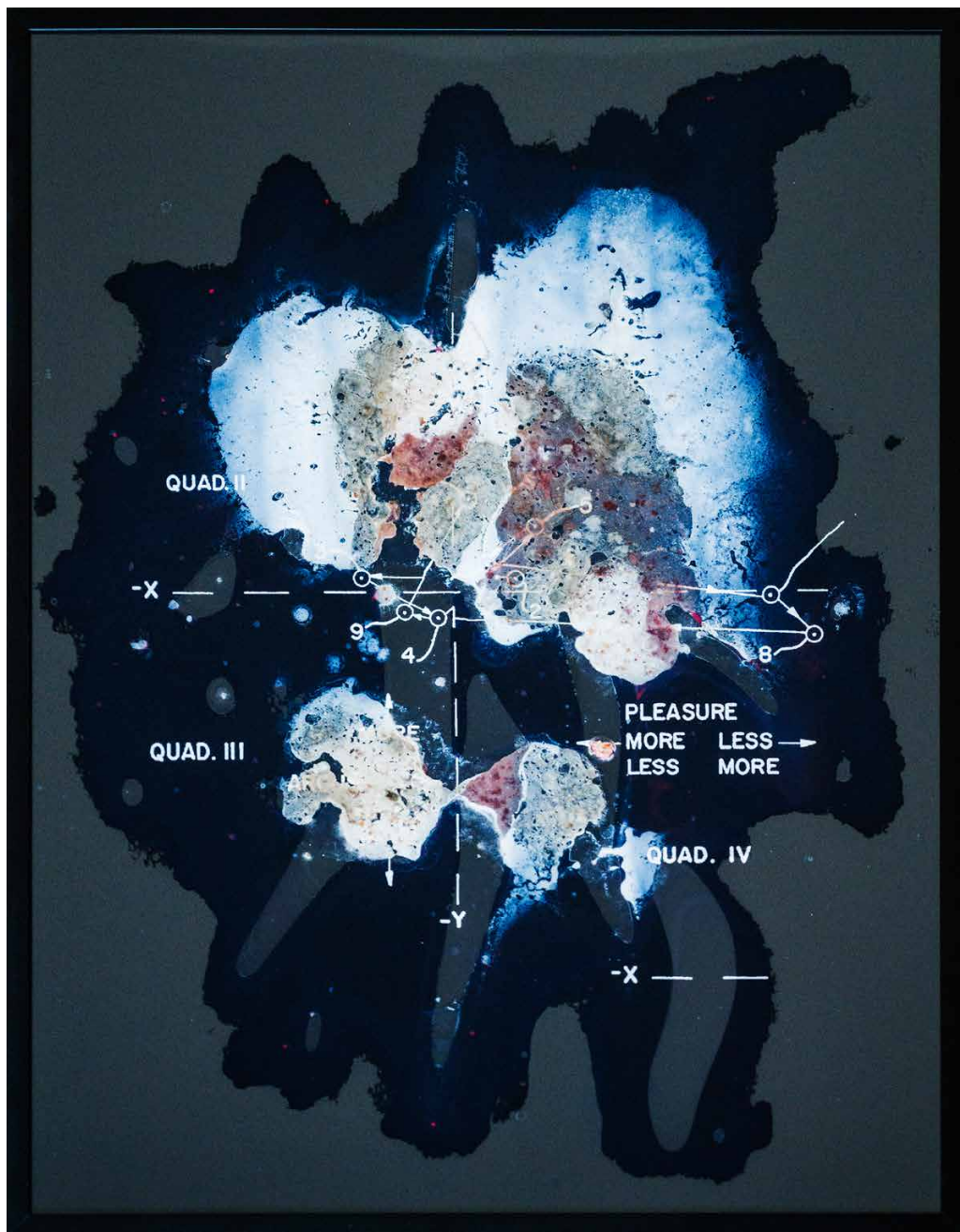
The images are processed digitally first, afterwards altered physically. Partially controlled, partially random process is a result of my actions, image generation by content aware algorithms and physical substances like microorganisms in saliva or soil.

Very basic in human – emotions, reflexes and behaviour is for some digital companies a valuable and exploitable resource that must be captured and monetized somehow.

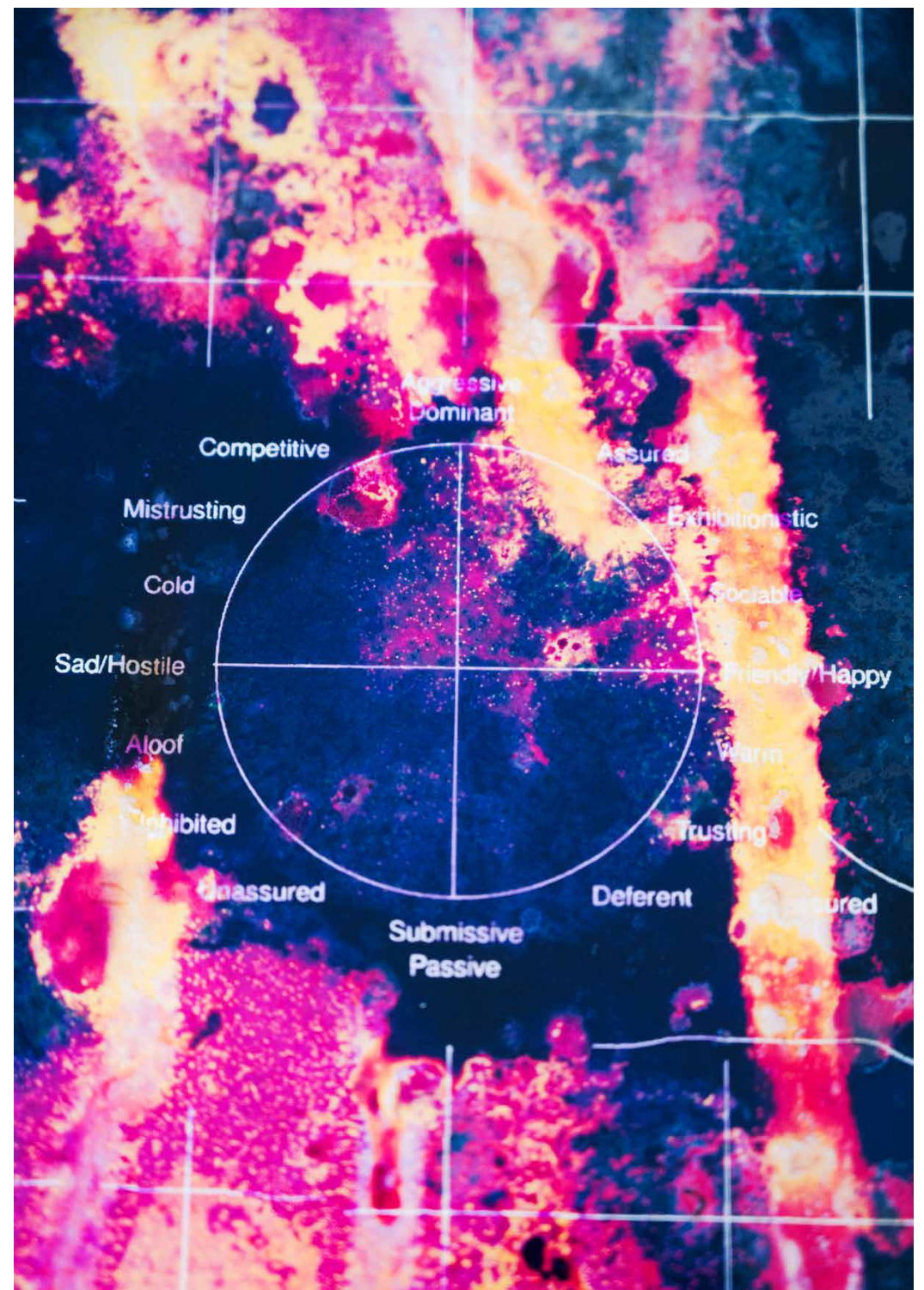
Using the same source knowledge as these companies my aim is to transform the basics to a state, where clear distinction between human and everything else becomes unrecognizable.

Some images are not yet „ready“ and will visibly change during the presentation and afterwards. When the image doesn't change anymore, then microorganisms have depleted all available energy and died, after leaving a visual trace.

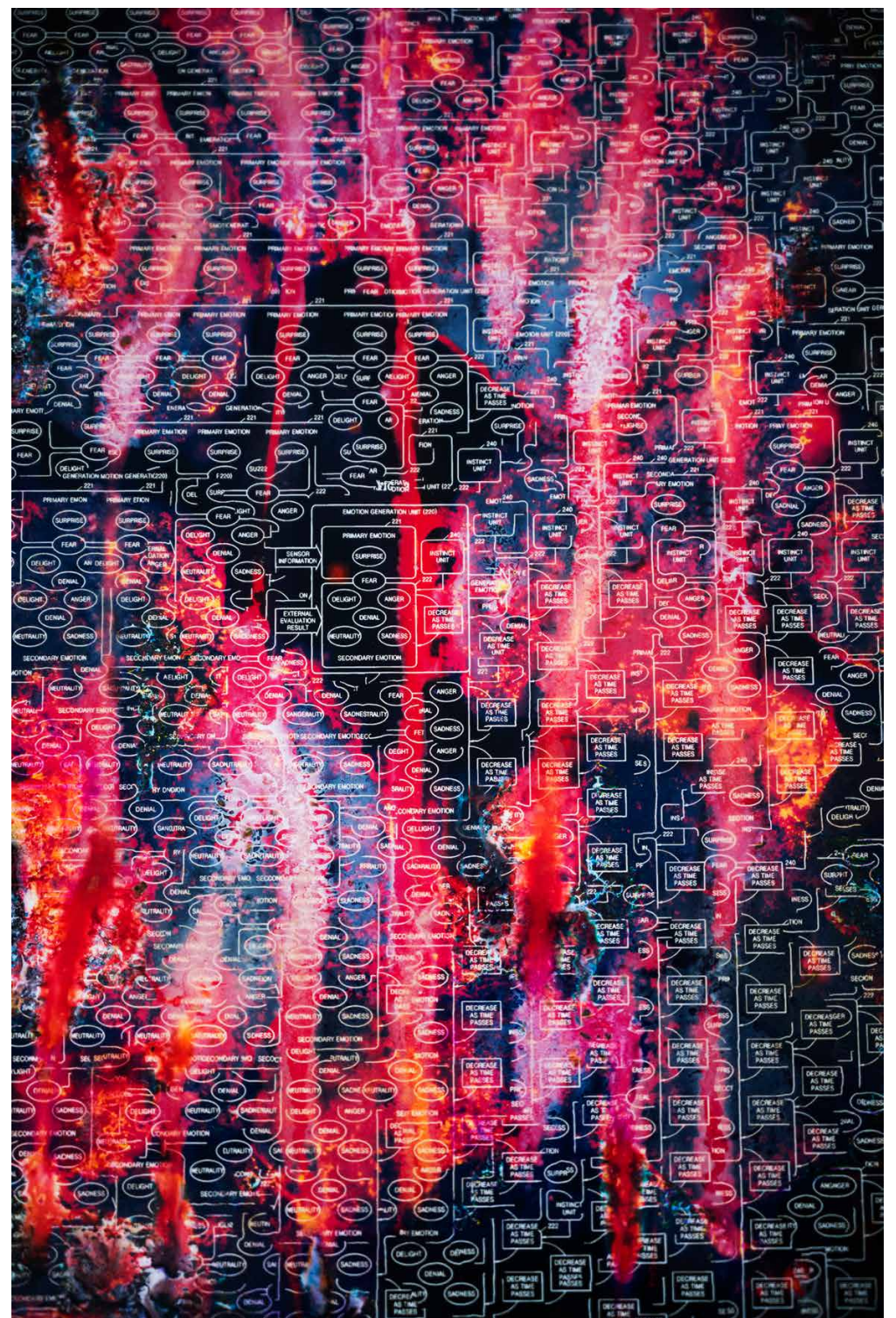
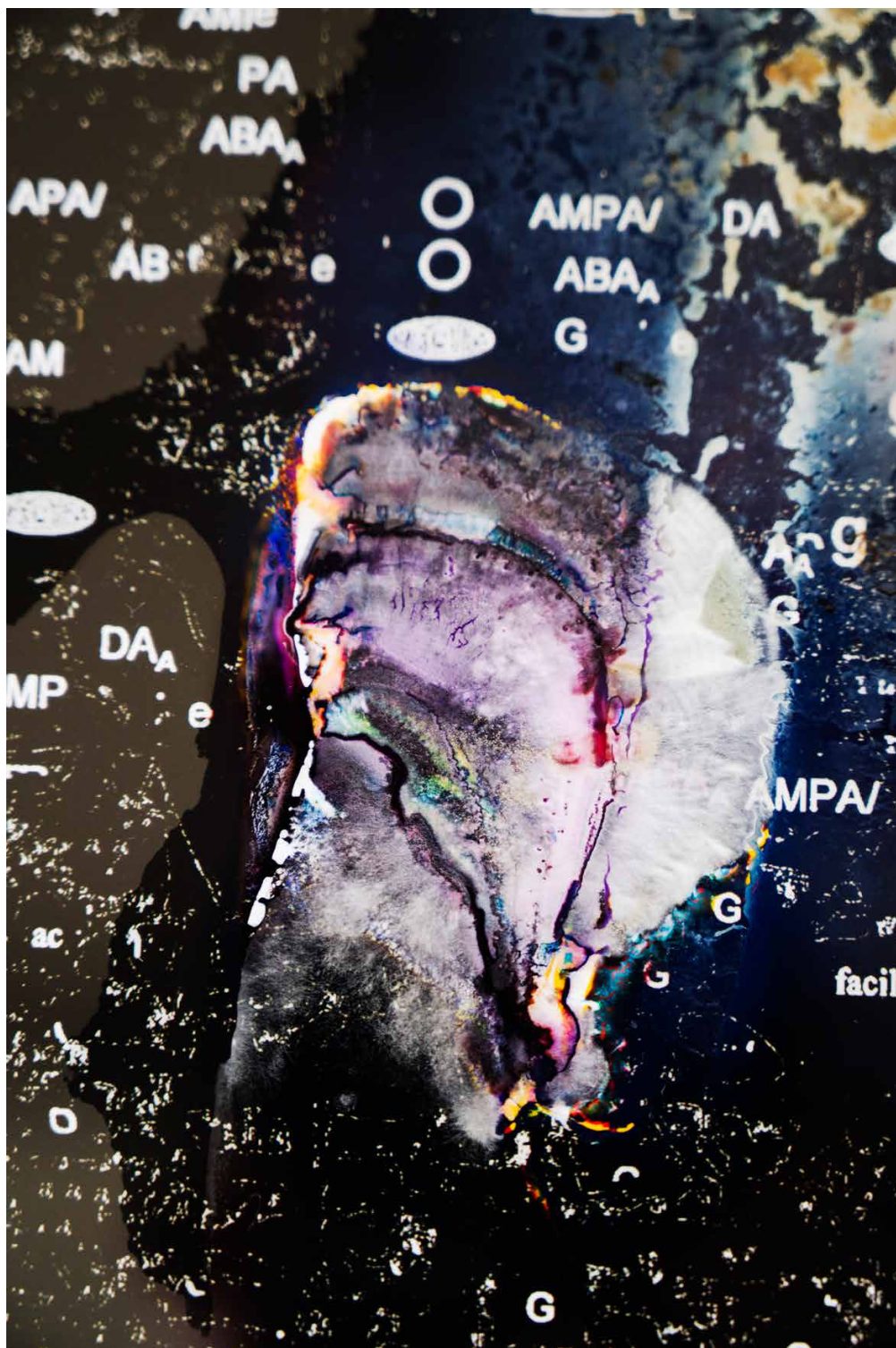




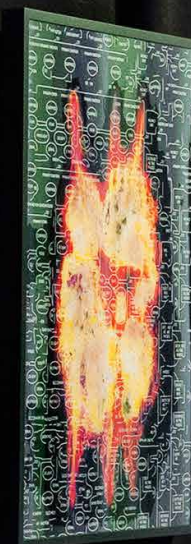
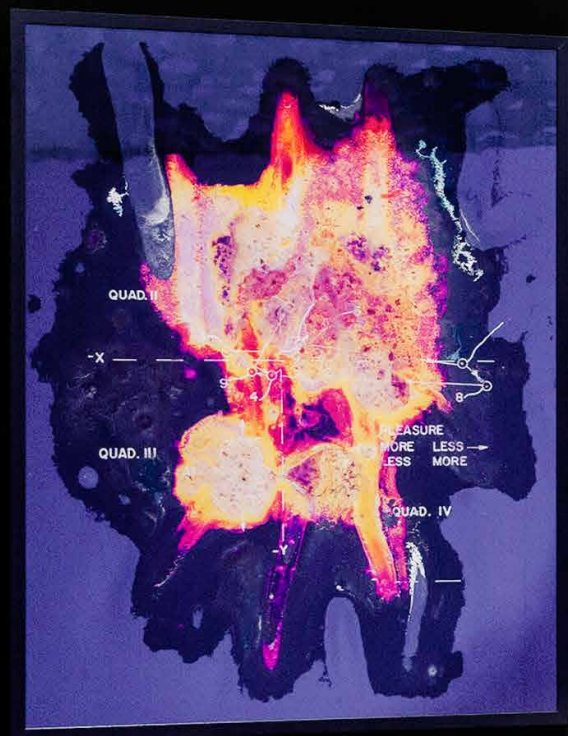








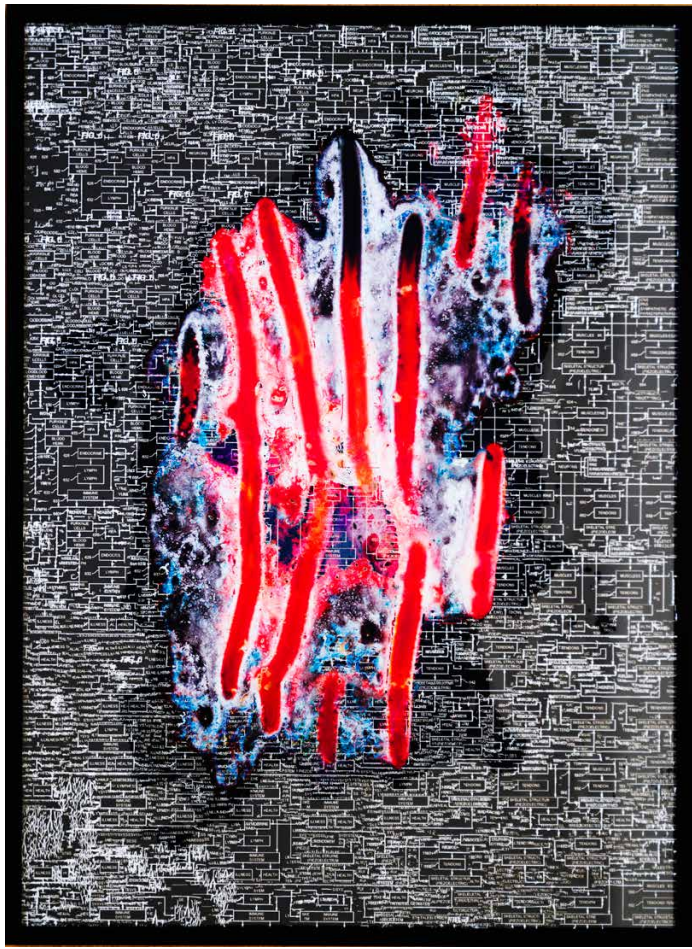
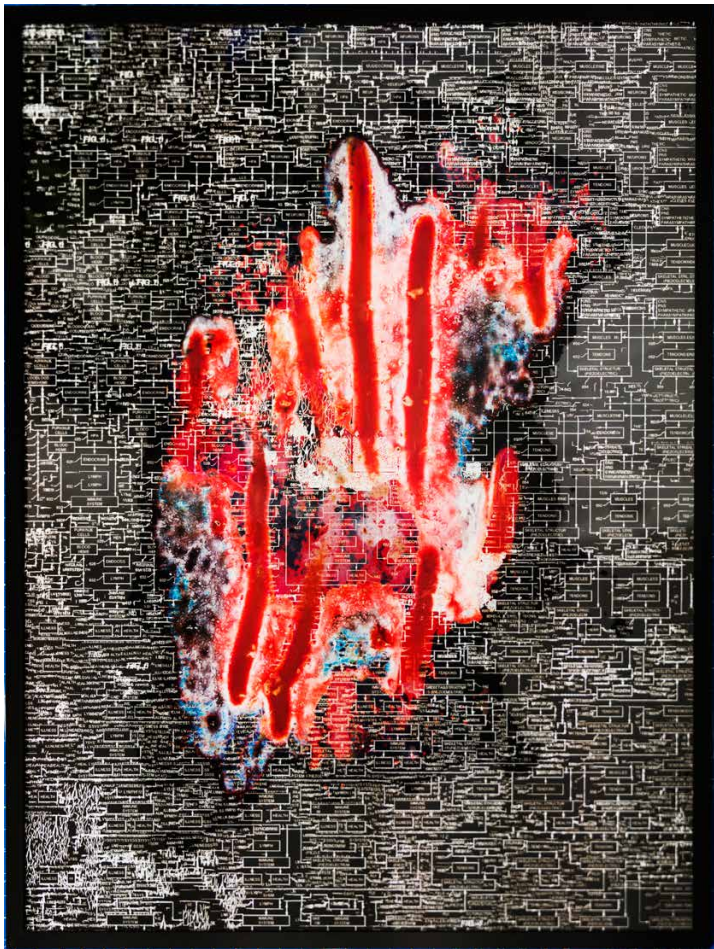




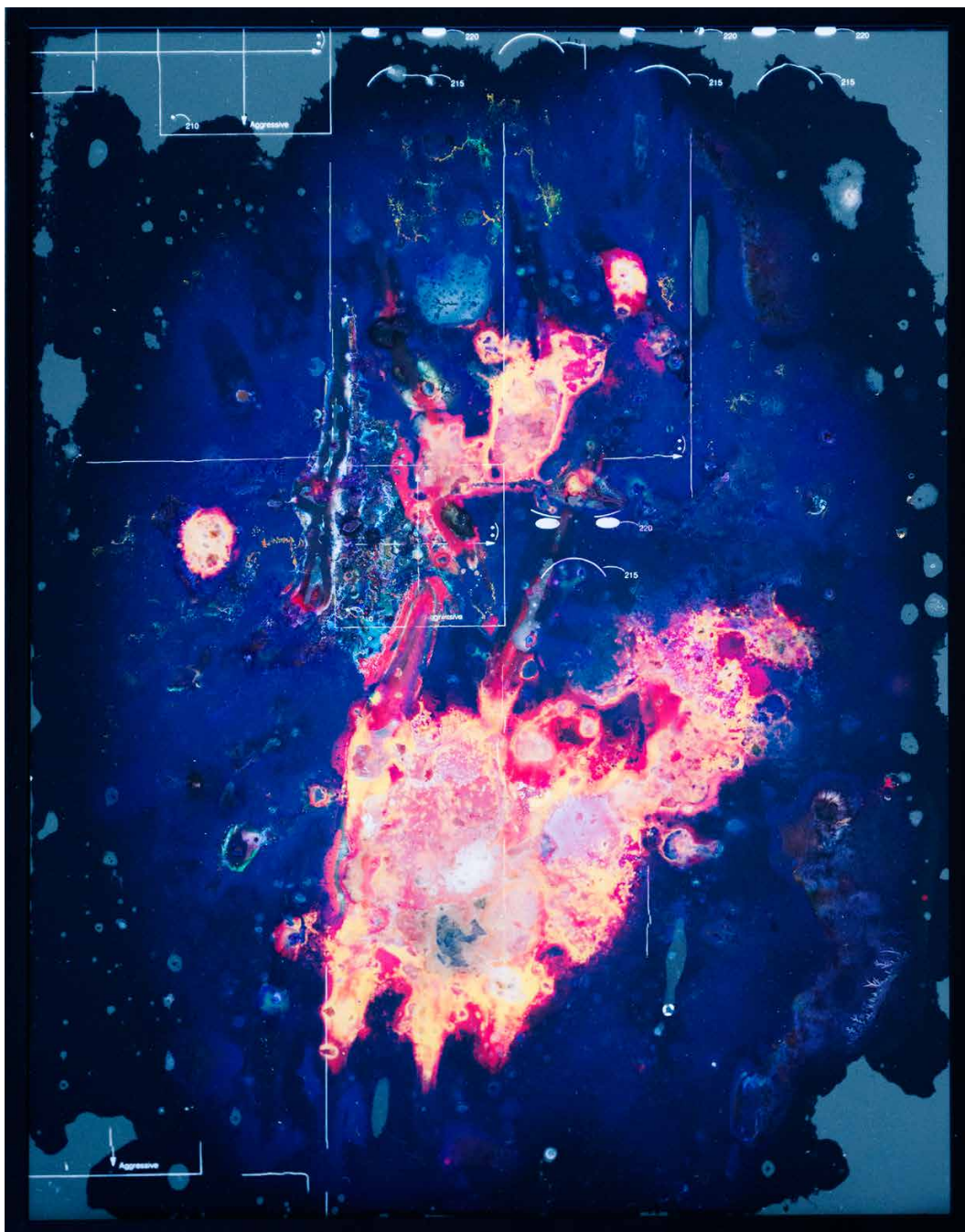
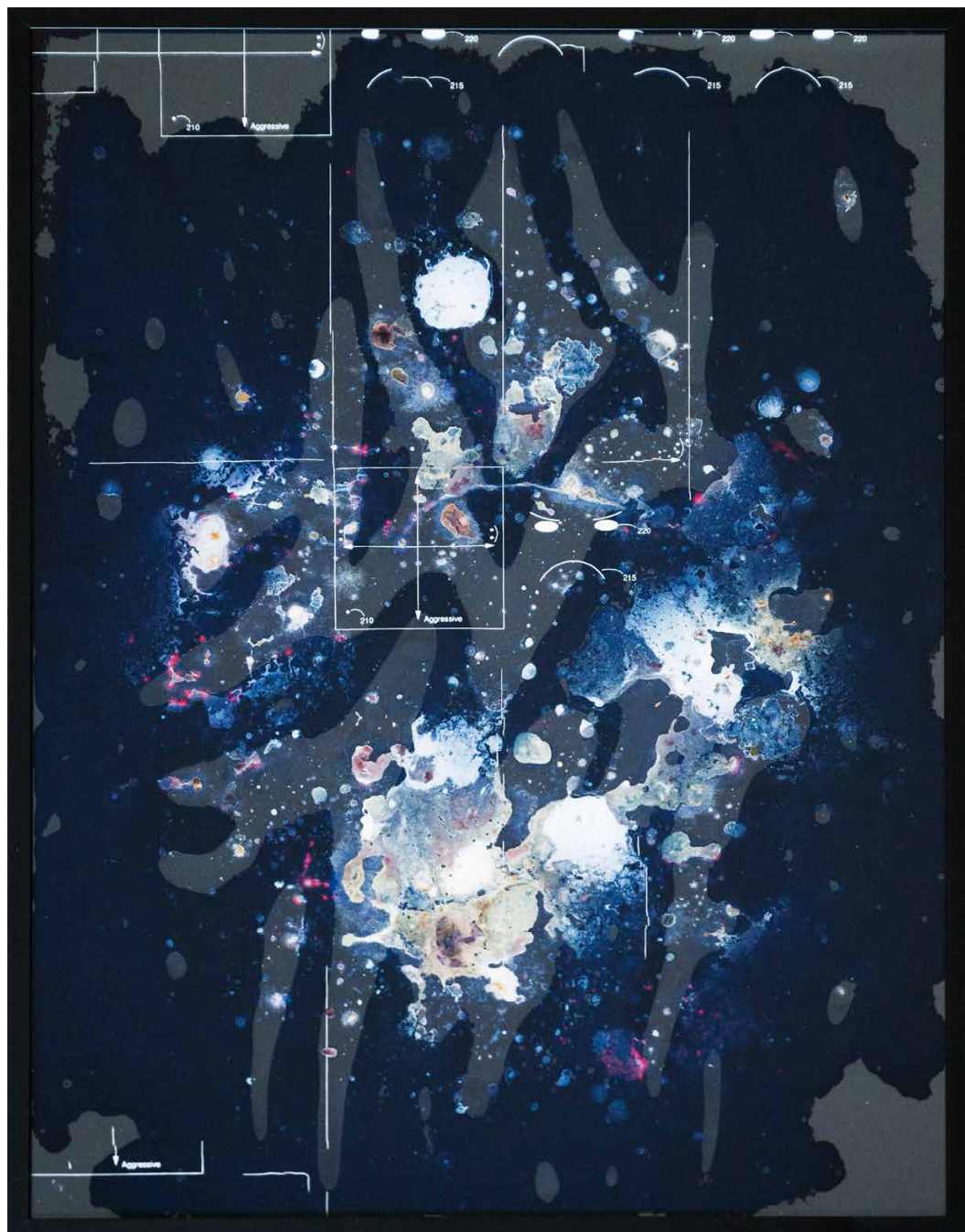


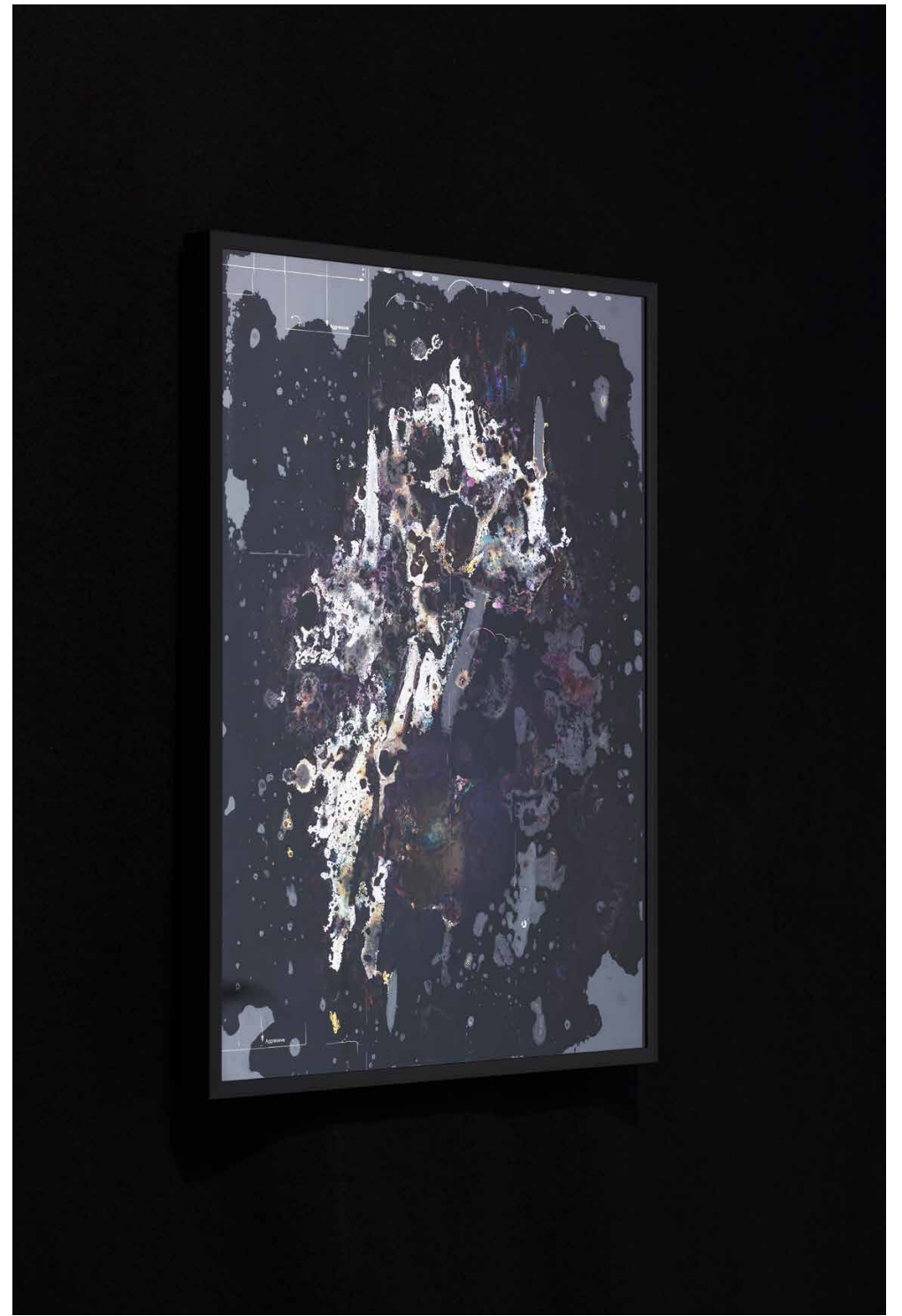




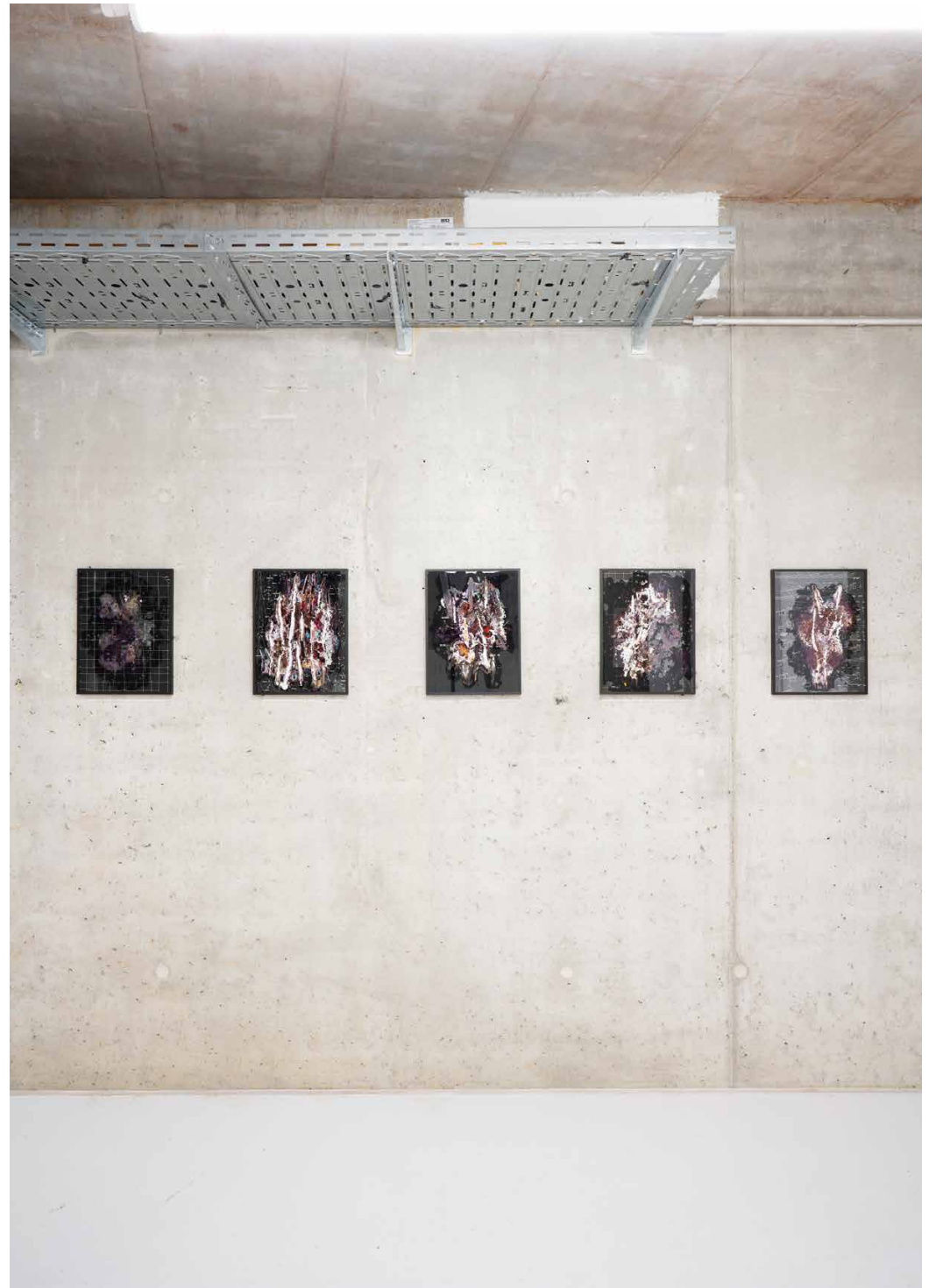












*UNIVERSALS I* at group exhibition A:PRÉS D'ÉSSERT, A:D:Curatorial, Berlin, 2023  
Photo: Carsten Becker

